

# Christian Courier

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## U.S. scientists, religious leaders talk environment with Gore

*Evangelicals, Catholics, mainliners, Jews agree 'the earth is the Lord's'*

Marian Van Til

WASHINGTON, D.C. — An unusual coalition of faith communities in the U.S. has banded together to set environmental issues within a philosophical-religious context so that problems in the environment can be better addressed.

The National Partnership on Religion and the Environment has announced a three-year, \$4.5 million campaign. Its aim is to develop environmental awareness and mobilize for action ordinary citizens in four faith groups: Jews, Catholics, mainline Protestants and evangelicals (including Mennonites and Reformed).

Officially, the four groups involved are the Consultation on the Environment and Jewish Life, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches and the Evangelical Environmental Network.

The partnership was formed last year out of a "Joint Appeal" by scientists and religious leaders. The Joint Appeal "resulted in a declaration signed by leading U.S. scientists, and the heads of many denominations and synagogues within those four groups," says signatory Dr. Calvin De Witt, an environmental scientist at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) and a member of the Christian Reformed Church.

"We needed to come to grips with the problem of informing the scientific community of ethical concerns related to the

environment," he explains. And from there, word will go out to ordinary church and synagogue members.

### Powerful, conspicuous ally

The partnership has a powerful ally in Vice-President Al Gore, says De Witt. Representatives of the partnership met briefly with Gore on October 4, the same day the partnership officially launched its campaign. Two-and-a-half years ago while still a senator, Gore was involved in the initial meeting (with Eastern College president Roberta Hestenes and World Vision president Robert Seiple) out of which came the Joint Appeal.

The October meeting with Gore "was mainly informative — we telling him what we're doing," says De Witt. "But what was significant to realize was that he was in this from the start. He has made strong statements about God's creation, making it clear he's a Christian. And the whole Christian environmental stewardship worldview that he outlines in his book (*Earth in the Balance*) he has confirmed as Vice-President."

### Able to integrate

De Witt says Gore is a man of great integrity who has often opted for principle rather than political expediency (as, for example, his consistent opposition to tobacco lobbyists even though tobacco is the major crop in his state). De Witt believes that "becoming Vice-President hasn't made Gore so politic about his life that this Christian witness has to fade out."

De Witt feels that conservative Christians who have roundly criticized Gore's environmental views, or who think the environmental problems are not really serious, don't have the whole picture. See **PARTNERSHIP**—p.6...



PHOTO: HUGH MACLENNAN

While landfills and stripped forests abound, much environmental degradation is not immediately visible.

## Campaign tells teens to hold out, not put out

*Chastity goes public with new 'True Love Waits' program*

Irene Bom

WILLOWDALE, Ont. — Jean Chretien, get ready to read.

On July 29, 1994, the prime minister is scheduled to receive, from thousands of teens across Canada, individually signed pledges to abstain from sex until they marry.

The presentation of the signed "covenant cards" is planned as the final flourish for "True Love Waits", a new abstinence campaign for church youth groups to begin in Canada next month.

But while the mail bags of pledges will be addressed to the P.M., the real target for the public message is other teens, according to the program's Canadian co-ordinator.

"We want to use peer pressure to encourage teens to say no to premarital sex," says Don Simmonds, also national youth co-ordinator for the Canadian Baptist Federation. Southern Baptists introduced the pro-

gram in the U.S. last year. Now the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is distributing the kit to its 7,000 member groups and churches, including the Christian Reformed Church.

### Role playing

The presentation scheduled for Parliament Hill highlights a new approach toward abstinence education in this program that adds congrega-

tional support and role playing to the "Just say no" message.

"Simply telling teens what the Bible says about sexual purity is not enough for them to overcome the pressure of the moment," says Simmonds.

"Now we're making teens accountable and we're giving them various refusal techniques."

"True Love Waits" offers See **TEENS**—p.2...

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Gesch nixes cloning of embryos.....p.13

### Thinkbit

Those who do not know how to weep with their whole heart don't know how to laugh either.

Golda Meir

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## News

# Hugs and talk skills help teens bridge say and do: youth workers

Irene Bom

SURREY, B.C. — "We're gonna wait," students at Fraser Valley Christian High School in Surrey, B.C. tell school counsellor Kathy VanAndel when the conversation drifts to sex.

But all too often, student pregnancies or other evidence end up showing that they didn't.

That gap between what students say and do is prompting "a fair bit of discussion" among staff at the school, says VanAndel.

It's prompting discussion beyond the walls of that Surrey staff room as well, as Christian counsellors and youth workers across the country discuss how sexual activity among teens in churches is increasing even as those teens have become more vocal about abstinence.

"Promiscuity is far greater in the Christian community than we think," says Tom Venema, a counsellor in St. Catharines, Ont.

"And my guess is that it's often those kids who are most vocal about abstinence who are

most at risk."

The "True Love Waits" abstinence program for church youth groups is going all out to tackle the problem by urging kids to make a public pledge against premarital sex.

"We didn't want to talk about whether petting was wrong if half of the kids in the group were already sexually active," says the program's co-ordinator Don Simmonds.

## Starts at far end

While the emphasis on decision-making is good, the downfall of an approach that Simmonds says "starts at the far end of the intimacy scale" is that it can tend toward legalism, say other counsellors.

"I've met 30-year-olds who say they are virgins but who have done everything short of actual penetration," Venema says.

"Just to stay grey on all the activities before that keeps sex distant for kids and means that they don't have to wrestle with those issues for themselves.

And that leaves them wide open," he adds.

Adds VanAndel, "There's a fair bit of denial going on among students about their sexual activity in the huge area between physical contact and having sex with someone."

"It's much better to see premarital sexual activity as a symptom instead of a cause," says Venema, adding that he stresses "the relationship aspect" when counselling teens about sex.

"Anyone who does not have healthy group and communication skills is at risk," he notes.

## Less training

Sexual activity among teenagers stems from the moral decline of our society and the fact that "fewer young people are being trained by loving parents," according to Simmonds.

Venema points out more immediate reasons. "Kids often

become sexually active after a loss, like a divorce or death.

And if they are insecure, signing a pledge doesn't give them the personality to say no several months down the road."

Teens are also more likely to have premarital sex if they're not getting hugs at home, adds Sid Hielema, part-time youth pastor in the Newmarket, Ont., Christian Reformed Church.

"So many kids have no memory of being hugged. And that physical deprivation in our community just plays right into our culture's drive for free sex."

Affection at home yields another benefit as well, adds Hielema: "People who say their parents hug them seem to have an easier time understanding what grace is all about."

The sexual and the spiritual "are closely intertwined in the Bible," he notes. "Our tradition has made sex so unspiritual and dirty, and that's helped to make sex before marriage almost ex-

pected."

## 'Unspoken reality'

Because the problem with Christians and sex is broader than a question of timing, Hielema suggests "True Love Respects" as a better title for an abstinence program.

The "unspoken reality" in churches is that "once a couple marries, anything goes," says Hielema.

But "the idea that whenever the husband has an itch, his wife had better be there is just as immoral" as sex before marriage, asserts Hielema.

"It's not fair just to pressure young people. We all need to be challenged to sanctify our sex lives."

# Teens respond to pressure statements about love, frigidity

...continued from p.1

offers "three simple steps" to encourage abstinence. A two-week study plan has group members read Bible passages on love and practice responses to pressure statements like "If you love me, you'll have sex with me" and "What are you, frigid?"

They are also urged to sign two 3" X 5" cards pledging "to be sexually pure from today until the day I enter a covenant marriage relationship." (The program refers to "sexual purity" instead of virginity in order to deal with students who have already been sexually active or have been abused.)

Youth leaders are told to emphasize that this covenant "to God, myself, my family, those I date, my future mate and my future children" must be a "rational, not an emotional decision."

The kit also suggests that teens wear a ring or key "as a daily reminder of their commitment to sexual purity" and that they write a pledge letter to



PHOTO: TERRY PAUL

Don Simmonds

their future mate — both to be given to the spouse on their wedding night.

## Church service

A special worship service follows the two-week study plan. During that service teens will bring their commitment cards to the front of the church and stand with "accountable"

parents or trusted adults while the congregation applauds.

The church will then forward one of the signed cards to the EFC for the July 29 presentation to Prime Minister Chretien. (Each teen keeps the second card as a reminder of his or her pledge.)

On that day next summer cards signed by American teens will also be on display in Washington, D.C.

"Not every kid who signs the cards is going to be spared," Simmonds admits. "But I'm confident that this program will go further than any other."

U.S. Catholic youth leaders joined the program two weeks ago. Well-known contemporary Christian musicians such as Michael W. Smith and the group Petra have also supported the program with special songs.



## TRUE LOVE WAITS

Believing that true love waits,  
I make a commitment to God,  
myself, my family, those I date,  
my future mate and my future children  
to be sexually pure from today until the day  
I enter a covenant marriage relationship.

(signed)

(dated)



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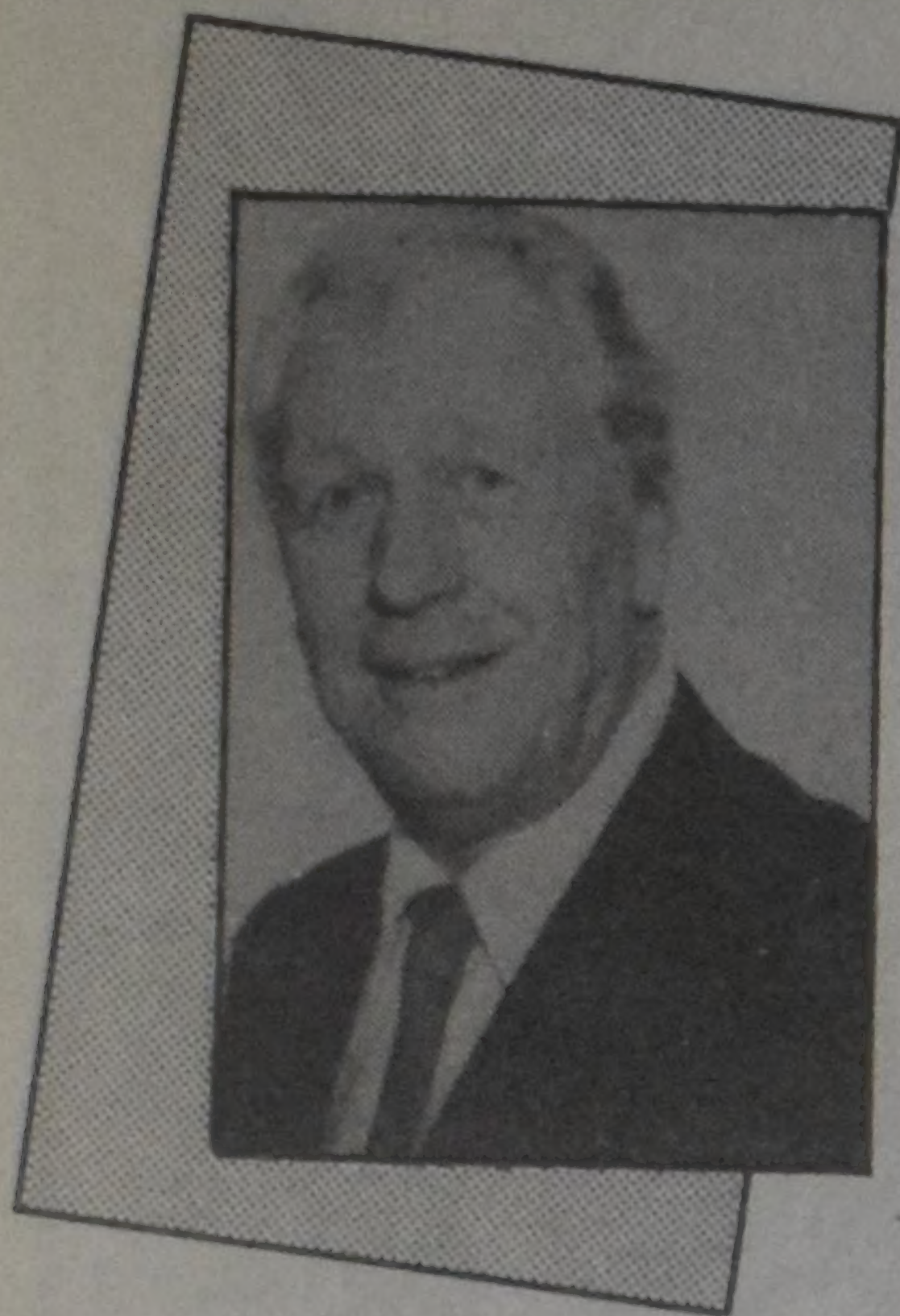
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## Comment

## PRESSREVIEW



Carl D. Tuyl

**N**umero Uno is resting in some warm climate, and Miss Copps, totally gentrified since her early rat-pack days, is taking care of the store. The Reformers, under the inspired leadership of Preston the Prairie magician, are doing P.R. stuff, inviting the press to such things as putting a "For Sale" sign on a car that had more miles on it than Daddy's Caddy from a 1950 sit-com. We will wait and see how long it takes for them to be immersed in the Ottawa glitz.

★ ★ ★

In the past week the press paid a lot of attention to the world trade talks in Geneva. There will be winners and losers when world trade barriers come down, and a lot of losers might be in Canada; it is almost certain that our agricultural supply-management system will soon be a thing of the past. Our Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Ralph Goodale, is fighting a rear-guard battle to save the system, but he is rowing against the current.

The cultural sector of our country might also fall victim to the GATT agreement. In spite of all these high-octane international negotiations it still will not be possible to buy Moosehead beer in Ontario or in British Columbia. There are many interprovincial trade barriers left in our fair dominion and they make as much sense as a canoe trip without a paddle.

★ ★ ★

**T**he other consuming interest of the press concerned itself with the future of Miss Kim Campbell who, until a few days ago did not seem to want to leave the PC head office voluntarily. Even the Liberals were so eager to see her have a dignified departure that they offered her several jobs. Remember, Miss Campbell is the lady

I was not allowed to call "Auntie." That bit of censorship, by the way, was disclosed in the *Mennonite Reporter*.

★ ★ ★

I recently overheard a politician being described as being so slick he could perform the Heimlich Manoeuvre on himself.

★ ★ ★

The Canadian Armed Forces are downsizing as if peace on earth were definitely right around the corner. There are hardly any more than 12,000 ground troops left, and that includes a whole bunch of three-star officers. You could hardly beat a Los Angeles gang with that many soldiers. The last Canadian Armed Forces contingent in Germany is a detachment of 118 personnel who do high-tech electronic snooping in Geilenkirchen. Now the Army wants to send part-timers (that is, militia members) to Bosnia.

★ ★ ★

**T**he CBC's Peter & Pam Show had a somewhat sensational piece about the morale of the Canadian peacekeepers in Bosnia. One in five soldiers may be psychologically ill. Add those to the list in the current rage of identifying victims. As a matter of fact, we are all victims of something or another, aren't we? Did not I at a very tender age undergo tonsillectomy against my will? Is there a support group for those thusly traumatized?

★ ★ ★

Sign on a butcher shop: "Pleased to meat you." Sign of the times: DeKlerk and Mandela sharing a Nobel prize in Oslo. They each received the equivalent of \$1 million Cdn.

★ ★ ★

**N**obody is really interested in the Michael Jackson family feud, so we'll skip that. The Russians went to the polls, but democracy in Mother Russia is still in intensive care. Even Boris Yeltsin should take lessons from Preston Manning. Boris is casting covetous eyes on Gorbachev's dacha.

★ ★ ★

The coming year will also bring presidential elections to Mexico. One of the candidates is a man whose name sounds like the refrain in one of those Spanish hymns in the Christian Reformed *Psalter Hymnal*: Luis Donald Colosio Murrieta. Many Mexicans believe that current president Carlos Salinas de Gortari won the 1988 election by fraud.

★ ★ ★

**T**he U.S. mood is quite sombre as the country takes stock of the violence that lives within its borders. Canadians who witnessed the Montreal massacre are certainly not people to point any accusing fingers. If there are any accusations to be made it is against the powerful NRA lobby (National Rifle Association), which has for a long time already resisted gun control. The recently passed so-called Brady bill, named after the

Reagan press secretary who was gunned down and paralyzed, is only a hesitant beginning in the effort to get the proliferation of handguns under control.

★ ★ ★

In a clear statement that Europe's welfare state will have to change radically if the unemployment crisis is to be overcome, the European Commission proposed lowering minimum wages and social security payments as a means to create new jobs.

★ ★ ★

**A** German court handed down heavy sentences against two young neo-Nazis who last year hurled firebombs at two houses where Turks lived, killing a grandmother and two girls. One got a life term and the other 10 years.

The German cabinet approved a \$5.1 billion plan for a high-speed train between Hamburg and Berlin. A high-speed train in Canada is about as far in the future as a Canadian colony in space, although that may come about sooner.

★ ★ ★

Paris' homeless people are giving a new meaning to the concept "mobile home." At 12:58 a.m. there is no ticket control at the Austerlitz station; homeless people board the train to Etampes, ride it south and return to Paris via the same train at about dawn. Paris police say that there are about 9,000 homeless people in the city.

★ ★ ★

**T**he following was quoted from the *Tucson Citizen* by Ben Wicks: "A workman was shot to death by police in the Mexican town of Coacalco. Four thousand angry townspeople subsequently mobbed the mayor's office to obtain justice. They forced the mayor to eat 12 pounds of bananas and resign."

Carl Tuyl is chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Church and is a member of the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care.

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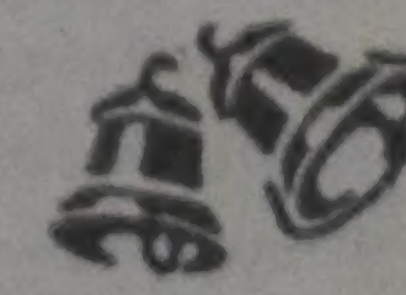
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## Editorial

# Lord, you have been our asylum

It's the custom among many Christians of Reformed persuasion to end the year with a reading of Psalm 90. Psalm 90 has that wonderfully melancholic message about the passing of time and us mortals being like new grass sprouting up in the morning and shriveling up under the midday sun. Underneath the acknowledgement that life is transitory, as well as the pits, lies that solid confession of enjoying the Eternal One's protection.

It's a perfect Bible passage with which to round off a year in the setting of a cozy family or friends get-together, right? I'm not so sure. Psalm 90 does not offer a cheap brand of comfort that can be imbibed along with a stiff drink on New Year's Eve. It's a hard-won confession made by a person who experienced his days as passing "under the wrath of God."

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- provides opportunities for contact and discussion for the Christian community.

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Psalm 90, we're told, was written by Moses, the man of God. He was an old man of God when he wrote the psalm, older even than the last charter member of the first Christian Reformed Church in Canada, Hendrika Hofman, who died in Picture Butte, Alta., a month ago at age 97.

### Of no fixed address

Moses lived 120 years. But what is significant is that he was a refugee for 80 of those 120 years.

The name of Moses' first son, Gershom, which meant, "I have become an alien in a foreign land," speaks volumes. The name expresses the heaviness that lay on Moses' heart because he was a refugee in Midian. Little did he know that his exile there would last 40 years!

Then followed the Exodus out of Egypt to the promised land. But Moses never entered the promised land. With his people he was a "boat person" for another 40 years. He was the stereotypical wandering Jew.

And then, at the age of 120, when his eyesight was still good and he still had his strength, the Lord put an end to his life, we read in Deuteronomy 34. Apparently Moses' body had no intention of dying of old age.

### Never a refugee?

Altogether, then, Moses was a refugee for 80 of his 120 years! Little wonder that Moses complains to God later in this psalm: "We finish our years with a moan."

Yet it is this Moses who confesses in verse one: "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations." The Jerusalem Bible translates that as follows: "Lord, you have been a place of refuge age after age."

Isn't that remarkable? Moses, the almost permanent refugee, confesses that he was never really a refugee because God was his asylum. This confession is the foundation of Moses' life.

### Refugees from Paradise

There is a way in which all of us are refugees, whether we were born in North America or not. All of us were chased from the Garden of Eden, in the persons of our ancestors Adam and Eve, because of our sins. Life is not as we want it to be. All of us know the pain of not living in Paradise.

Being refugees from Paradise expresses itself in many ways. Some of us are political refugees; some of us are economic refugees. Some of us are marital refugees, family refugees or refugees from a sinful past. Some

*The Expulsion from Paradise by Masaccio*



of us are refugees from an abusive past. Some of us are church refugees, sickness refugees or poverty refugees. All of us know the experience of having been displaced in life.

### I long and thirst

But at the heart of being Paradise refugees lies the realization that we are spiritual refugees. We have been separated from God, the source of our life and hope. There's a hymn verse based on Psalm 63 that expresses the longing of a spiritual asylum seeker: "Apart from you I long and thirst, and naught can satisfy; I wander in a desert land where all the streams are dry."

That pretty much sums up the last 40 years of Moses' life, doesn't it. A desert with dried up streams is a dismal place to be, unless you have the gumption to say along with Moses: "Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days."

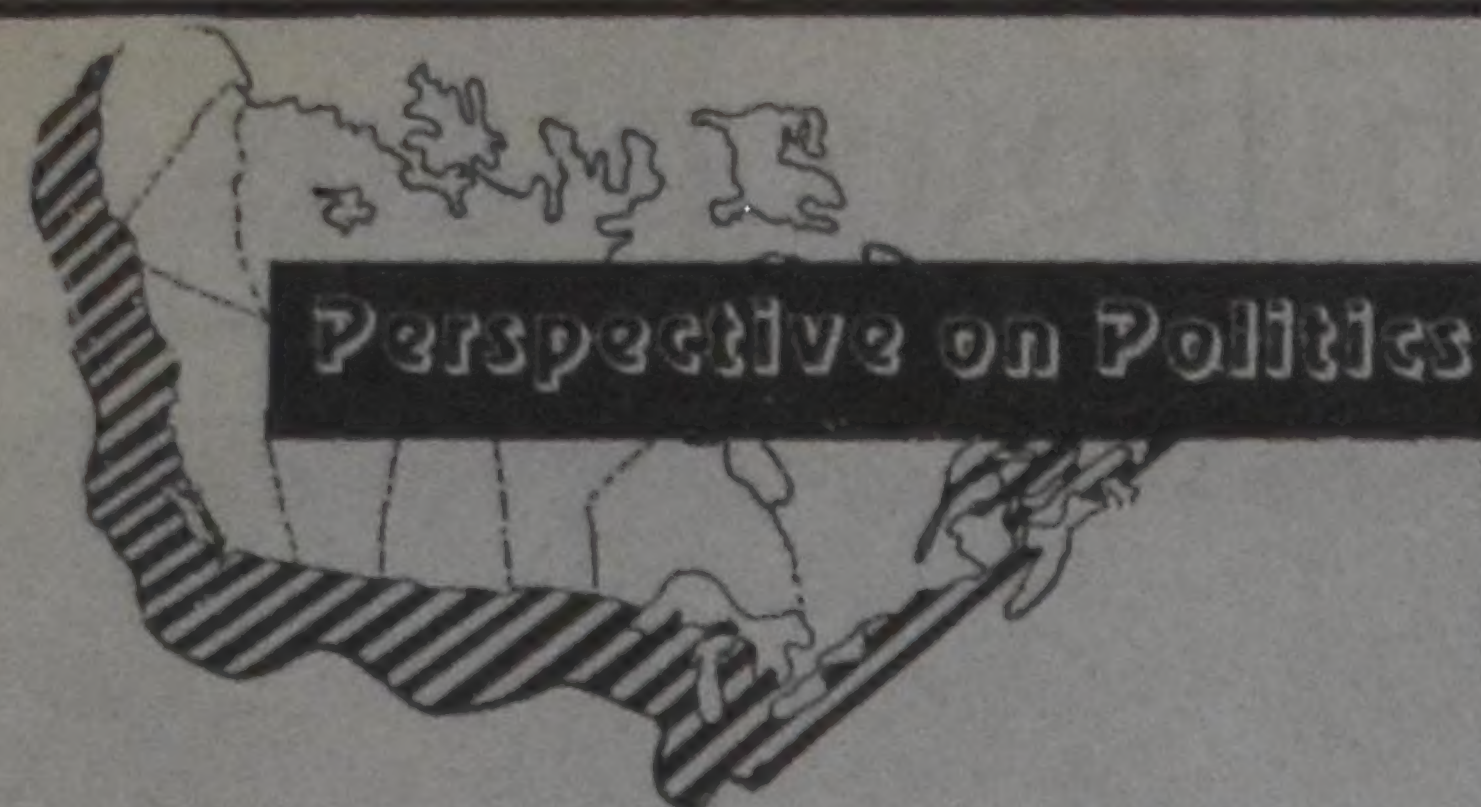
We can learn from old man of God Moses who confessed with the deep longings of a refugee: "Lord, you have been our place of refuge throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

Are you depressed by your refugee status? The Lord is your asylum as you enter the unknown territories of 1994.

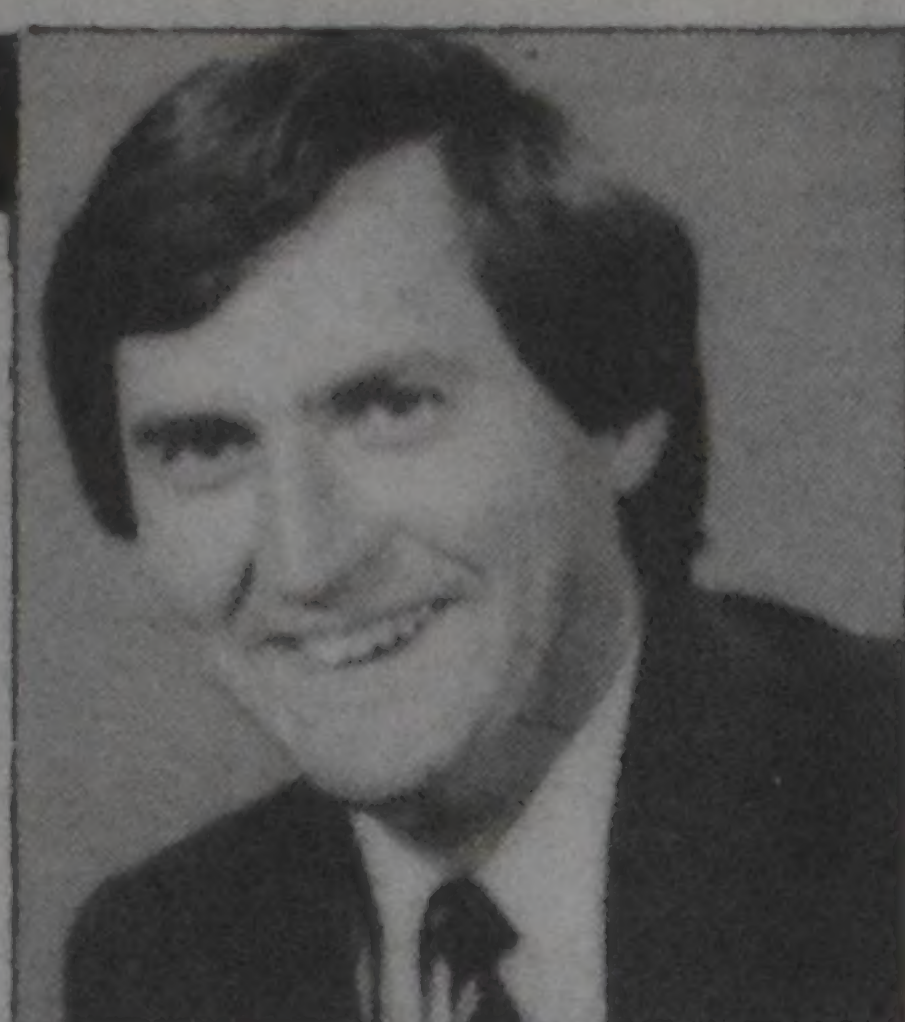
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## World Politics / Letters



Paul Marshall



## A touchy subject

The Royal Commission on Reproductive Technologies has produced some pleasant surprises. For one thing, it actually recommends that certain practices be flatly prohibited. These include the sale of eggs, sperm and fetal tissue, and financial surrogacy arrangements.

In some instances, even types of *research* are banned. The commission recommends that research using embryos relating to cloning or animal/human hybrids be prohibited by criminal legislation.

We should not underestimate how unusual it is for an official body in the English-speaking world to make such recommendations. Usually the function of "ethicists" in our biotechnical and medical world is to study an area, pronounce that it is fraught with danger, and suggest that we should only proceed very carefully. But the assumption is always that things will and must proceed.

While there are things to be thankful for in the commission's report, it still has many drawbacks. It would allow experimentation on human life in the early stages of development. And it separates questions of reproduction from questions of human relationships, especially marriage.

## Incoherencies in approach

But beyond particular problems in the report there are basic incoherencies in its approach.

It calls for outlawing commercial surrogacy arrangements. It does so for two reasons. One is that it demeans women; it makes their pain of pregnancy and birth a simple commodity; it violates the relation of mother and child by forcing a mother to give up her child.

The other reason is that it separates the having of children from the biological act of parenting. The children become commodities who are transferred at will to someone else.

But even without the involvement of money, the child is still treated as an object, to be transferred by adults at will. Money makes it worse but doesn't alter the fundamental reality. And the commission would allow "sperm donation," i.e., surrogate fathering. It is obvious that the degree of involvement required from "sperm donors" cannot be compared with that of surrogate mothers. But the structure of the relationship remains the same. Biological fatherhood is systematically separated from the raising of children.

The commission also gets itself into a conundrum on the matter of abortion. Though it avoids saying so, it wants, in effect, to stop abortions carried out for purposes of "sex selection." But it can't say that outright, as this would offend powerful pro-choice lobbies. So it tries to tackle the question via prenatal diagnosis of sex. And it suggests that such diagnosis should be banned if it is *done with the intent* of killing off offspring of the "wrong" sex.

Its ground is that nearly all abortions for sex selection are undertaken to destroy female offspring.

The commission is, rightfully, appalled by this practice, and maintains that this violates the dignity of women. However it shies away from the implications of this view for abortion in general.

After all, if the abortion of females is demeaning to women, is abortion of the disabled demeaning to the disabled? What about prenatal testing for Down's syndrome and the abortion which commonly follows?

More generally, if abortion for certain motives is wrong, why not abortion for other motives? Finally if, as many pro-choice advocates maintain, the fetus has no moral status, then how can destroying it be demeaning to anyone else?

The commission has, unwittingly, opened up the question of the status of the unborn child. But it tries to hide this question. We should not let either this commission or any successors do so. Such questions are the hinge of the issue of "reproductive technology."

*Paul Marshall is senior member in political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.*

## Delusions are powerful

After receiving the November 26 issue of *CC* this morning and reading C. Van Galen's letter, I was reminded that I didn't give you my response to Heather Stilwell's comment following the election defeat (*CC*, Nov. 12).

I was amused to see that she felt that the CHP was only two seats behind the Progressive Conservatives, and that somehow this implied a strong power base. A person's or party's capacity for self-delusion is amazing.

It reminds me of the old story that dates back to before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. was in an athletic contest with the U.S. They were the only two participants and the U.S. won. Yet when the results were released in *Pravda*, this is what the Soviet public

got to read: "In the most recent games, the U.S.S.R. came in second place, while the U.S. was next to last."

The Van Galens do the same sort of thing, for they credit *CC* with more clout than I suspect it has. Even if every subscriber to *CC* had voted for the CHP, I doubt if that would have significantly altered the outcome of the federal election.

Now this is not to say that having God on your side (or more correctly, being on God's side) does not give one a significant advantage. But I cannot help wonder if God's side and the CHP are so closely identified after all.

Lloyd Burghart  
Montreal, Que.

## Obsessed with throwing stones

When I read Mr. and Mrs. C. Van-Galen Sr.'s letter to the editor (Nov. 26), I wondered whether my little story about stone throwing could be a good response. Here it is.

By observation, I find it amusing how the human race is obsessed with throwing stones. The southeastern shore of Lake Ontario at Presqu'île Provincial Park is littered with rocks, pebbles and skipping stones. Toddlers, children, teenagers, adults, papas, mamas and opas throw stones. Yes, even omas throw an occasional one. I myself threw a six-skipper and marveled at my arm (Blue Jays stuff?).

There is a story in the Bible about throwing stones — the one in which the Pharisees brought our sister to Jesus. She had been caught in the act of adultery. She should have been stoned to death, according to the law of Moses. (I always wonder where the brother was

who must have been close to the action. Would he have been stoned to death too?)

However, Jesus' response was: "If any of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Nobody did.

We are all sinners. But in spite of that knowledge we all still throw stones — stones at our political leaders, at our cultural leaders, at our pastors, elders and deacons ... and at each other.

There are intelligent stones, dumb stones, religious stones, doctrinal stones, theological stones, Reformed stones, discriminating, outrageous, lying and false stones. And some of them aim to hurt and kill.

Jesus threw stones too! But he threw stones only at the stone-throwers.

Ted Ferwerda  
Guelph, Ont.

## Where were the laypeople?

This morning an elder in my church phoned and asked me: "Did you read the *Christian Courier*?" The answer was No, because we had just received it in the mail. The brother said, "Read page 20. I'm pissed off." Not exactly the kind of language a Christian Reformed brother should use, and I don't think you would use it in *CC*, although you have no doubts about what the man meant.

I read page 20. On it Irene Bom reports on her interviews with members of the Canadian Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada. I discovered why the elder was upset. Bom had not taken the time to talk to ordinary laypeople. She had talked only with Rev. William Tuininga, Rev. Jake Binnema, Rev. Albert Dreise, Rev. Evert Busink, Rev. Arie van Eek, Rev. Neil de Koning and Rev. Phil Stel. Robert VanderVennen was the only lucky non-pastor that got quoted.

The elder mentioned that in ages past only pastors participated in debates at synod and classis. "But thank heaven," he said, "that's over. Laypeople are just as up to date and able to discuss church business as are pastors."

It's not for me to stick my nose into someone else's business, but I thought you should know. Next time Irene Bom would do well to include some laypersons as well.

Klaas Terpstra  
Hamilton, Ont.

## Response:

The report by Irene Bom on the discussion surrounding the question "Should the CCRCC join the Canadian Council of Churches?" was based on notes (not interviews) taken by Bert Witvoet. During the time the editor was at the meeting no elder or deacon delegate other than VanderVennen spoke on the topic.

Editor



## Society/Environment

## Rooftop Musings

Alyce Oosterhuis



## God with us

'Tis the day before Christmas and as I look inside and outside of our house, it is clearly apparent that this is one of our more important celebrations. On every table there are candlesticks; on each beam there is a banner; on all the front-yard trees there are lights. Hymns resound throughout the house; a manger scene graces the piano; "God with us" adorns the welcoming wreath.

Christmas is the one time in the year when we make God's presence in our lives known in very tangible ways. If we decorated our home regularly to give such concrete evidence of God's presence, people would begin to wonder whether we were becoming superficially pious, or whether our decorating instincts had deteriorated to becoming tacky.

After all, with our Reformed Christian understanding of all of life as religion, one goes beyond the physical signs and displays of piety to walk and talk constantly with God. Didn't our reformational forefathers tear down the statues and icons in the churches because people had been lulled into believing that the presence of such things was sufficient for salvation? Besides, how many texts and crosses and proverbs do I wish to hang on our home's walls?

## No 'religious statement'

My parents always had a proverb or a text hanging in the living-room and in their bedroom. And in many of my contemporaries' homes, it is not unusual to find something similar on their kitchen or living-room walls. Yet in our own house, after the seasonal decorations have been packed away, there is little physical evidence of "God with us." The icons on our wall are there for aesthetic purposes; they do not make a religious statement.

The Dutch Bible, which lies unopened on our copper chest, provides frequent occasions for sentimental journeys but is not the Bible that is used for daily devotions. We have some "ancient" records of hymns and religious classics, but with a CD player, who listens to records in our household?

As I reflect on this Christmas season I find that I have come full circle from an early childhood sentiment of "wanting my own text on the wall," to an adolescent disgust with those glossy, embossed wooden texts in public places, to an adult appreciation for some aesthetic license, to a mature adult's wish for a visible remnant of Christ with us after the season is over.

## Visible signs of Immanuel

It has taken me a long time to realize that my parents were not necessarily lousy interior decorators — their texts and proverbs were constant reminders of Christmas in springtime, summer, fall and winter. They did not bind phylacteries to their foreheads as the Old Testament Israelites were bidden to do in Deut. 6:8, but they did make emblems for their walls and doors. And whenever we entered or exited a room, our eyes would light upon that text to bind its words upon our hearts.

*God with us:* yesterday, today, tomorrow. I think that I will keep the creche on the piano for the whole year. At least that will remind me weekly when I dust that God continues to be present.

*Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis is associate professor of education and psychology at The King's University College, Edmonton.*

## Partnership has ambitious plans



PHOTO: KIVOSHI KIMURA

*Habitat loss is a serious problem for countless species of animals and plants. Cooperation and commitment by landowners is essential to saving prairie habitat like that needed by the endangered burrowing owl.*

...continued from p. 1

And that's something the partnership aims to provide.

"Gore has worked as a journalist, and he's done probably the best synthesis I've seen combining scientific and ethical information on this. The remarkable thing is that he's able to integrate all this and put it into a whole context. His basic theme is: Christian environmental stewardship is what we should be about."

## Unusual but crucial coalition

De Witt acknowledges that the partnership is an unusual coalition. But whether you're on the "liberal" or "conservative" side of Christianity or anywhere on the spectrum of Judaism, you all believe "the earth is the Lord's," he asserts. "Most of the basic environmental teachings come from the Old Testament; and that is shared across the board."

"There's often an attempt [within the partnership] to get the lowest common denominator," De Witt continues. "But if the lowest common denominator is the Old Testament — that's not too bad!" he laughs. He realizes that some will be leery of such a broad-based partnership but

says, "I think we can work together on this without compromising other beliefs."

De Witt believes the partnership can be effective, not the least because it is made up of the religious bodies that "really do direct the ethical worldview in the U.S." And it is currently preparing to send out, for three consecutive years, "education and action" kits to 53,000 congregations across the U.S., including every Catholic parish in the country. World Vision is lending its expertise to the final preparation and distribution of the kits.

According to partnership press releases, the ambitious campaign will also involve: training programs for both clergy and laypeople; legislative updates and "testimony and action alerts" which focus on environmental justice issues; the creation of a "1-800 Green Congregation Hotline" which will document "grassroots religious environmental activities"; joint educational projects with Nobel laureate and other prominent scientists and scientific associations; summit meetings for leaders of historic black and Orthodox churches; the preparation of an environmental curriculum for every Jewish seminary; and telecon-

ferences and videos for Catholic dioceses, parishes and schools.

A full-time staff of 13 are already at work, headquartered in New York City in offices provided by the (Episcopal) Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Paul Gorman, executive director of the partnership, says, "A major new force — with enormous breadth and its own unique perspective — is entering the arena of environmental activity."

The partnership will be aided by Gorman's considerable mediation skills, says De Witt — how often have such diverse religious groups actually worked together toward a common goal? — as well as by the way the partnership is set up.

Gorman explains, "Individual faith groups will craft their own respective contributions to this common effort." He believes "progress will be gradual and cumulative," but crucial. "How people of faith engage the environmental crisis will have much to do with the future well-being of the planet, and in all likelihood with the future of religious life as well."



## Cinema/Arts

## Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

## Mrs. Doubtfire

Rated PG

Stars Robin Williams, Sally Field, Pierce Brosnan  
Written by Randi Mayem Singer and Leslie Dixon  
Directed by Chris Columbus

There's no comedian quite like Robin Williams; his ability to "do voices," impersonate others and to improvise the quick-fire, often satirical retort (almost always funny) is unparalleled. In this movie he puts his unorthodox talent to brilliant use.

Williams plays Daniel Hillard, a soon-to-be-out-of-work actor who provides the voices for cartoon characters. Hillard is a compassionate, decent man who deeply loves his three children. But he's also mercurial and kinetic, making him difficult to live with. As the film begins, his wife, Miranda, has decided that 14 years' worth of antics is enough; she tells Daniel she wants a divorce. The reasons for the marital break-up seem a little flimsy. (One gets the impression that people this likeable and understanding should be able to work out their problems; but as in life, that doesn't always happen.)

## Resourceful solution to loneliness

When Miranda is given custody of their three children (a 14-year-old girl, 13-year-old boy and a five-year-old girl), Daniel is allowed to see them for only a few hours on Saturdays. Though he may "mess up" in other ways, he's a devoted father, so that arrangement devastates him (and the children).

His solution is to apply for the housekeeper's job Miranda advertises. He has his makeup-artist brother turn him into a 60ish woman. (Incidentally, his brother is gay, but the movie makes no overt comment on the situation.)

Daniel supplies his new self with a Scottish accent and a "history" and — *voila* — "Mrs. Doubtfire" is born. When you see Williams in action you'll understand how even Daniel's children and wife wouldn't recognize him.

## Humor with a message

The last half of the film consists of the humorous pratfalls involved in taking on the persona of someone of the opposite gender. And funny it is. But it also provides an opportunity for Daniel to better understand his wife and women in general.

Thankfully, the film is not non-stop yuks; it has an explicit message, aimed both at children in single-parent families and divorced parents themselves. The message to children is reassurance — that your parents' divorce is not *your* fault; that they still love *you* though they no longer love each other. To parents the message is: be aware of how your divorce is affecting your children; don't include them in your animosity towards your (ex-) spouse; and spend as much time with them as possible. Though the situation here is divorce, keeping families together comes through as very important.

Some critics have reproved *Mrs. Doubtfire* for concentrating so much time on such an explicit message. But that is one of its strengths. Williams uses the Mrs. Doubtfire character to good advantage to get the message across clearly without being preachy. A somewhat more legitimate criticism may be that these kids are just too terrific and well-mannered to be true. But, then again..., mouthy, precocious TV-sitcom brats shouldn't be taken as the measure of North America's children.

*Mrs. Doubtfire* is surely funny; but it is also a warm-hearted story which will reassure kids and perhaps get parents to think.

## Gutenberg Bible discovered in Moscow

Marian Van Til

MOSCOW — One of only a few remaining Gutenberg Bibles has been discovered in Moscow by Russian government authorities. Johannes Gutenberg (ca. 1395-ca. 1468) invented movable type and printed the first books — Bibles — in the history of Western civilization.

The Bible found in Moscow is in "excellent condition," say those who have examined it, and is one of only 12 Gutenberg Bibles printed on calves' hide. There are 46 Gutenberg Bibles which are known to have survived to our century,

but not all of them are complete, nor are all in good, much less "excellent," condition.

The "Moscow Bible" came to the Russian capital via Soviet troops during the Second World War. Soldiers took the Bible from a Leipzig museum and brought it home with them as a trophy. *The Daily Telegraph* reports that the Bible will likely be returned to Germany. It is part of ongoing, delicate negotiations to return to their rightful owners art and artifacts stolen by both the Nazis and the Soviets during the war.

This Gutenberg Bible is the

latest in a series of "trophy art" which has turned up in Russia. Last year the "Koenig collection" of paintings by Dutch Old Masters was uncloseted after being in storage since the end of the war in Moscow's Pushkin Museum. *The Daily Telegraph* reports that pilfered works by Van Gogh, van Dyke and Rembrandt, too, have been displayed in Moscow and St. Petersburg. On the other hand, Russia wants restoration of countless icons and artifacts stolen by the Nazis. However, much of that material has been dispersed to collectors around the world.

## Toronto operetta theatre's ninth season features a musical rarity

TORONTO (Canadian Scene) — One of the stars of Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* by the Toronto Operetta Theatre is tenor Peter de Soto. In the role of a violin teacher, de Soto will be that rare person: a professional singer playing a professional musician without the need of a "double" in the orchestra. De Soto has played violin with the Toronto Symphony for 11 years, but is retiring to devote his full time to a singing career.

The operetta will be presented at Toronto's Bluma

Appel Theatre from Dec. 27 to 31 and on Jan. 2. De Soto will be joined by Sally Diblee who won critical praise in the Canadian Opera Company's recent production, *Nosferatu*. Henry Ingram and Grant Cowan, both veterans of the operetta company, will also play in *Orpheus*.

The second full operetta of the 1993-94 season will be *Naughty Marietta*, by the American composer Victor Herbert, starring Peggy Dwyer and Juan Chioran; it will run at the Jane Mallett Theatre in Toronto

from April 26 to 30.

The Toronto Operetta Theatre will continue its concert performances titled *Sunday of Comedy and Romance* with *Fin de Siecle in Paris* on Jan. 16, starring soprano Rosemarie Landry. It will be followed by *Summertime with the Gershwins* on Feb. 20. Tenor Mark Dubois in a program of works from the humorous and satirical operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, will complete the series on March 6. All performances take place at the Jane Mallet Theatre.

## Purcell manuscripts discovered in England

Notebook yields 'new' pieces and performance information

Marian Van Til

LONDON — A notebook containing the manuscripts of 21 keyboard pieces by Henry Purcell has been discovered among a box of old music scores bought by an antiquarian music manuscript dealer in Devon, England. Purcell was the greatest English composer of the 17th century and among the best in Britain's history.

The manuscripts are part of a notebook which appears to be filled with composing drafts by the composer — they are sloppily written and contain ink smudges and crossed-out sections. Some of the pieces include fingerings, which are expected to yield new information to musicologists about late 17th century keyboard perfor-

mance.

The 21-piece notebook joins only five other original Purcell manuscript collections extant. And it includes music by Purcell's colleague Giovanni Battista Draghi.

The pieces were discovered just in time to be included in the New Purcell Edition of the composer's complete known works which will be published in 1995 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of his death.

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Church, Marian Van Til, page editor

## Canadian Baptists studying women's place in the church

TORONTO (BCOQ) — The place of women in ministry in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec (BCOQ) will come under intense scrutiny in the months ahead, as individuals and churches consider a landmark report on women in ministry.

The report has sections on background, and theology, and recommendations for the denomination and its churches, but also chronicles in some detail the struggles and ex-

perience of women in seminary, ministry and denominational life.

The \$36,000-study was funded by a combination of the BCOQ, Baptist Women, McMaster Divinity College Student Association, foundations and \$10,500 from individuals and churches. The core material for the report emerged from taped and transcribed interviews with 60 women from six provinces and the U.S.

The BCOQ Council has

decided to release the entire 110-page report to its constituency in an attempt to generate a broad-based discussion on the report's recommendations. The document was reproduced as a lengthy insert in the November issue of *The Canadian Baptist* magazine. Copies were also mailed to churches.

The report recommends changes for seminaries, churches and the BCOQ itself. They range from a requirement

that all denominational executive staff be openly in favor of women in ministry, to the need to create policies and standing committees to deal with complaints of sexual harassment, to steps to enforce employment practices that deal with persistent inequities of salary and benefits experienced by women in ministry.

BCOQ executive minister John Wilton explained that the many recommendations of the report — some of which are

considered quite controversial — have not been adopted or rejected by the council. Instead, he said, the council hopes that there will be a high volume of response which will help a second study committee shape further recommendations.

The BCOQ has recognized the ordination of women for decades, but churches are free to allow their own standards.

## Albanian government, Orthodox Church clash over restitution of property

Willy Frautré

BRUSSELS, Belgium (NNI)—The Albanian Orthodox Church and the Albanian Ministry of Defense are

battling over ownership of four monasteries which were taken over and occupied by the military more than two decades ago.

During the communist period, in which Albania declared itself the world's first officially atheist country, government policy called for the destruction and/or appropriation of all places of worship. In some cases, large properties like the Orthodox monasteries were converted into military bases.

Despite a new policy of restitution of former religious properties, Orthodox officials say they are being placed in the role of beggars asking for something they already rightfully own.

Negotiations between the church and the Ministry of Defense continue. The Orthodox Church, however, says it is claiming only three of the four disputed properties. The fourth, Dracoti Bridge Monastery, has been formally handed over to the Ministry of Defense.

Complicating the negotiations is the claim by the director of privatization at the Ministry of Defense, Nain Qollcaqou, who says he does not recognize the church as rightful owner of the monasteries, which, from his point of view, have ceased to exist as such.

Qollcaqou has complicated the process by indicating that the military does not allow the transfer of a military base into civilian ownership. However, under legislation passed by the Albanian Parliament, the church has the legal right to lay claim on previously owned church property if it can prove

## European rights group calls for removal of restrictions on religion

Willy Frautré

ATHENS, Greece (NNI)—The European watchdog group Human Rights Without Borders is pressing the newly elected government of Andreas Papandreou in Greece to abolish its restrictive laws on religion in order to bring the country into harmony with European standards on religious liberty.

In early November, the group sponsored a two-day seminar in Athens entitled "Freedom of Religious Conscience in Greece." Western European, Greek and American legal experts discussed the current situation in Greece, where laws against proselytism and

other restrictions on non-Orthodox religious minorities are still on the books and enforced.

Following the seminar, the group released a statement urging the new socialist government to make the necessary legal changes "so that any believer of any religion has the right to fully manifest his or her religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance, in community with others and in public."

The statement further urged that every Greek believer be allowed "to fully express his or her faith and religious beliefs publicly, and to endeavor to share them by means of individual contacts [and] personal conversations." The group issued a series of specific recommendations about how the government could achieve those ends. The statement and recommendations were sent to all the deputies in the Greek Parliament.

Before Greece assumes the presidency of the European Community in January, Human Rights Without Borders has promised to propose a draft law abolishing Greece's restrictive religion laws.

## Church associations target clergy, missionaries

Marian Van Til

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — There are two independent, church-related associations in Canada — one aimed at clergy, the other at missionaries — which aren't as well known as they would like to be in the Christian community. To change that, each group has embarked on a publicity campaign to get the word out.

The Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministries (or just "Forum") has been around since 1921 but was for years known as The Ecumenical Forum of Canada. The Forum describes its mission as being to prepare missionaries and other church workers for cross-cultural experiences, but also to encourage ecumenical and interfaith "dialogue ... amongst all churches and religions of Canada." In July 1994, for example, the Forum will sponsor conferences on missionary orientation, the returning missionary and missionaries on furlough.

The Forum is headquartered in Toronto.

### Clergy sharing

A much newer group is the Canadian Association of Clergy (CAC), founded just last year after a series of consultations by clergy representing a number of denominations. CAC began in the North but is now based in Hamilton, Ont.

CAC says its mission is "to uphold professional standards, to provide services to persons involved in Christian ministry and to enrich the effectiveness of pastoral work in the community." CAC also aims to lend support to members and their families "in times of difficulties in their professional life and relationships." The group hopes that the variety of institutions with which clergy regularly deal will recognize CAC's professional standards.

CAC also provides scholarships and professional advocacy and counselling, and organizes educational seminars.

it existed prior to 1967.

According to informed sources, the Ministry of Defense may be attempting to foil the Orthodox Church's claim in an effort to auction off the three monasteries. But analysts say it may be difficult to sell the buildings since they are located far from urban centres.

However, the military base

at the monastery of Voskopoja may attract a buyer interested in opening a mountaineering center for tourism purposes.

The church is arguing that money from any sale of the properties would total less than the accumulated rent that should have been paid during the 25-year period that the army occupied its properties.

**Sorry!**  
no  
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December 31,  
1993.



## Church

Bible  
Notebook

Al Wolters



## God breaks the silence

"But the angel said to him: 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard'." (Luke 1:13; NIV).

If we look at the Bible from a chronological point of view, Luke 1 is the beginning of the New Testament. Everything began when God sent the angel Gabriel to Zechariah to announce the birth of John the Baptizer. It is from this point onward that we hear the story of Jesus Christ, around whom the rest of the New Testament turns.

When Gabriel speaks to Zechariah, God breaks the silence which he had observed for 400 years. The last prophet of the Old Testament was Malachi, who lived some four centuries before the New Testament. A great deal had happened to the Jews since the Lord had last spoken through one of his messengers. The Persian Empire had fallen to the Greeks, and the Greeks in turn had fallen to the Romans. God's people had endured oppression and fierce religious persecution during these centuries, but had only the written Word of God to hang on to because the living, prophetic voice of God had ceased.

It is significant that God finally breaks his silence to a man called Zechariah. The name Zechariah means "the Lord has remembered." It indicates that, despite his long silence, God had not forgotten his people and his promises.

## New exodus

The name Zechariah is particularly appropriate at the beginning of the New Testament because it contains an echo of an earlier time in Israel's history when God had also been silent for about 400 years. This was the period between Joseph and Moses, during which God's people grew and were enslaved in Egypt.

The curtain goes up again on the history of God's people in the book of Exodus where we read that "God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob" (Exodus 2:24).

This was the prelude to the great act of deliverance which God accomplished in the Exodus. Similarly, Gabriel's approach to the priest called Zechariah was the prelude to an even greater act of deliverance — a second exodus — through Jesus Christ.

## Comfort of joy

The message which the angel Gabriel gives shows that he is quite conscious of the fact that he is picking up where the prophet Malachi had left off. He tells Zechariah that the son which is to be born to him "will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and the power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children" (Luke 1:17). These last words are a quote from Malachi 4:6; they constitute an explicit link between the last chapter of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New. It is the same God who continues his revelation to his people.

In the light of all this, is it not striking that the words which God speaks after his long silence are words of reassurance and comfort? The angel says to Zechariah: "Do not be afraid; your prayer has been heard." On the eve of Christ's birth, these are God's very first words to his New Testament people.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

## Mennonites to hold institute on conflict for church leaders

SASKATOON (SCMS) — Saskatoon Community Mediation Services will host a training institute for church leaders next spring to provide an opportunity for them to develop their skills as resolvers of conflict.

The institute will focus on building skills for resolving both interpersonal and institution-based disputes. It will also

offer insight into conflict in the Bible and the special dynamics of congregations.

Richard Blackburn will be the "trainer." He is the director of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Centre, in Lombard, Ill. The centre is an affiliate of Mennonite Conciliation Services. Blackburn has led many training sessions and has

helped resolve many disputes, institutional as well as interpersonal. He often works within the church setting.

More information may be had by contacting Michael Bryson at Saskatoon Community Mediation Services; (306) 244-0440; fax: 244-9923.

## Church of England head denies questioning Charles' fitness to rule

LONDON, England (EP) — The Church of England is being drawn into the debate on Prince Charles' fitness to be King of England. The succession of Charles has been called into question because of his alleged long-standing adulterous affair with Camilla Parker-Bowles.

The *Sun*, Britain's top-selling tabloid, reported that the Church of England had urged Charles to renounce his claims

to the throne. As king, Charles would be head of the Church of England, which teaches that marriage is a sacred institution and opposes adultery. The *Sun* wrote, "Senior clergy feel it might be appropriate for Charles to renounce his inheritance early and devote his life to preparing William, 11, for the task."

George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, denied attempting to stop Char-

les from taking the throne. A spokesperson for Carey said, "Any suggestion that the archbishop was seeking to influence the succession to the throne is pure fabrication."

But the Archdeacon of York kept the issue alive, telling the BBC Dec. 7 that if Charles will cheat on his wedding vows, how can he "go into Westminster Abbey and take the coronation vows?"

## FROM COAST TO COAST

## ENGLISH RADIO:

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

Abbotsford-CFVR	7:30am	850
Burns Lake-CFLD	9:15am	1400
Kitimat-CKTK	8:30am	1230
Osoyoos-CKOO	8:30am	1490
Penticton-CKOK	8:30am	800
Port Alberni-CJAV	10:30am	1240
Prince George-CIRX	7:00am	
Prince George-CIBC	8:30am	94.3
Princeton-CKRP	8:30am	1460
Smithers-CFBV	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CKSP	8:30am	1450
Vancouver-CJVB	9:00am	1470
Vancouver-(fm)	9:00am	103.3
Vernon-CJIB	9:30pm	940

## ALBERTA

Brooks-CKBR	8:00am	1340
Edmonton-CHMG	7:00am	1070
Edmonton-CHQT	7:30am	880
Edson-CJYR	10:00am	970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	9:00am	1230
High River-CHAB	6:30am	1280
St. Albert-CHMG	7:00am	1070
Taber-CFEZ	8:00am	1570

## SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSI	8:00am	1280
Weyburn-CFSL	8:00am	

## MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS	9:15am	810

## ONTARIO

Ajax-CHOO	9:30am	1390
Atikokan-CFAK	9:30am	1240

Burlington-CING (fm)	8:00am	107.9
Chatham-CFCO	9:30pm	630
Guelph-CJOY	10:00pm	1460
Hamilton-CHAM	7:30am	1280
Kapuskasing-CKAP	9:00am	580
Kingston-CFMK	10:00am	96.3
Newmarket-CKAN	8:00am	1480
Oshawa-CKAR	8:00am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHVR	10:00am	1350
Sault Ste. Marie-CFYN	10:00am	1050
St. Catharines-CKTB	7:30pm	610
Samia-CHOK	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS	8:45am	1240
Timmins-CKOY	9:30am	620
Windsor-CKLW	9:00am	800
Wingham-CKNX	10:30am	920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm)	8:00am	102.3

## NEW BRUNSWICK

Fredericton-CFNB	6:30am	550
Newcastle-CFAN	9:00am	790
Saint John-CHSJ	9:00am	700

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY	7:00am	630
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## QUEBEC

Montreal-CFQR (fm)	7:30am	92.5
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## NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY	6:00am	1420
Kentville-CKEN	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC	7:30am	1320
Sydney-CJCB	8:00am	1270
Weymouth-CKDY	8:30am	1031
Windsor-CFAB	8:30am	1450

## FRENCH RADIO:

## Perspectives Réformées

## ONTARIO

Cornwall-CFIF	9:30am	1170
Timmins-CRCL	9:30am	620

## QUEBEC

Montreal-CHRS	8:00am	1090
Valleyfield-CFLV	8:45am	1370

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# For eighty lousy bucks!

*An unemployed neighbor comes calling*



## Anne Hutten

The phone rings as I sit down to supper. Don's on the other end, voice slow and ponderous. He is a "neighbor" by rural standards, living within the same community of 160 households. The employment office would label him an unskilled farm laborer, and he's not always employed at that.

"Anne, I'm sorry to bother you, but I need to ask you a favor," says Don in his polite, hesitant way. Once I assured him that I'm doing nothing important at the moment, the urgency of his request spills out. He needs not one, but two or three favors, as it turns out. Among other things, there are forms to fill out, and Don's not very good at writing. I invite him to drop in the next morning at nine.

The next day it's nine on the dot and I'm cleaning out the garage loft where we store left-over insulation, old tires and the usual debris that's not quite old enough to throw out. Below me I hear voices, and there's Don and Elaine, his wife. I invite them into the house and we talk over a cup of tea with fresh homemade bread.

It doesn't take Don long to explain the situation. They have no money and no food;

he's waiting for UIC benefits that will be another month in coming. This is one tough December, Christmas and all, with no way to get gifts for Leroy, their six-year-old, and no money for groceries.

"Phyllis tells me you have something to do with the food bank," says Don. "Do you know if we might be able to get a week's groceries to tide us over, just till I get my feet back under me?" He goes to some length to explain that this is purely a temporary problem. He's always managed to feed his family, including a first disastrous attempt at marriage, undertaken too young and ending in divorce.

## 'Community leader'

Yes, I do have something to do with the food bank, I tell him. Do they need help today, or can they wait till tomorrow when the food bank has its regular hours? If there's a serious emergency I can take them personally and get them what they need. One more day is fine, says Elaine. They still have some Kraft dinner and potatoes.

She brings her request forward as well. There's a program that gives out turkeys at Christmas and she'd like to get

one. But the application form must be signed by "your minister or priest, social worker or other community leader."

"You're sort of a community leader, ain't you?" she asks.

That one makes me laugh. You've come a long way, baby! I tell myself. Forty years ago we kids scoured the Erin dump for castoff clothing and other garbage that might prove useful in our household of 11 children. Today I'm a community leader? Well, if a directorship in the food bank qualifies me as such, then probably I am. Besides, I know Captain Steenburgh of the Salvation Army, and he's in charge of the Christmas hamper program. Along with a turkey, the hamper will include all the fixings for Christmas dinner, and clothing and toys for Leroy. Certainly this couple qualifies for help. I sign the form.

But Don has another, more serious problem. He's been served with a warrant of sorts, an intimidating document that commands him to appear in family court five weeks from now. He's defaulted on child support and his ex-wife is suing him.

"That's just a lot of b...s....!" says Don, and I see him starting to get hot under the collar. "That woman knows darn well I always pay her when I can. I just got a little behind on account of not having work all spring, and then when I got the

job with Woodworth's I had all these bills to catch up with and I just can't quite make enough to pay them all on time."

## Poverty has a familiar face

This, I think, is the face of poverty in Canada. I've known Don and Elaine for some years. Every spring when I canvass for the cancer fund, they're on my list and they usually manage some small donation. I've brought books for Leroy and given Don a few days' work, but otherwise haven't made much of an effort to visit. This community has so many people living on the edge, a widespread underclass that never quite catches up.

A torrent of words pours out of Don, like a dike that's given way before a flood tide, and I hear some choice terms. Elaine catches my eye and pulls a wry face. She's heard it all before. But Don keeps telling me, explaining his willingness to work, illustrating his good intentions. He even brought her firewood this summer when he couldn't make the payments, just to shut her up, he says.

"I should shoot the bitch!" he concludes, and I try to calm him by referring to the form he's been asked to fill out. We need numbers, not emotion, at this point. What is his income and what are his expenses? But he's off and running again.

"Well, I just want to explain to you that these here numbers

I jotted down are just what I thought I should tell them," he explains. "Because I'm not working right now and this is what I was getting down to Woodworth's." No, I tell him, it's important to give his current income, which is zilch; or his anticipated income from UIC benefits. That's all he'll have to work with when it comes to making child support payments. The judge will need to know his exact financial situation, not what he used to make.

It's a sad, sad business going through someone else's dollar calculations when they're in trouble. Don gives me the numbers, and I make notes on the form. I call UIC to determine what level of benefits he may expect: 57 per cent of gross wages. With luck, he'll be getting almost \$175 each week. That's not bad, I say, knowing they are used to living cheaply.

But then come the expense side of the list. I'd forgotten that he owns his home, such as it is, and there are mortgage payments. And property taxes, and a loan for renovations, and a loan from a finance company to install a septic bed and a bathroom. Even with an outrageously low figure for food and clothing, the expense list adds up to more than the income list.

Clothing? We don't buy clothes, says Elaine. It's hard to argue with that, given what

*A torrent of words pours out of Don, like a dike that's given way before a flood tide, and I hear some choice terms.*





## Features

# The grace of generosity

William Klassen

At the heart of what it means to be a Christian is the grace of generosity. The incarnation — Jesus being rich, yet becoming poor — is the model of the Christian life. As Paul puts it, "For you know how generous our Lord Jesus Christ has been: he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Throughout his life Jesus gave himself for others. It is hard to imagine any other historical figure who lived so fully for others.

At the heart of the North American way of life is greed. We are accustomed to measuring success by the amount of money we earn or have accumulated. By definition, many people correlate poverty with failure.

If what is said above is true, then the church faces an enormous challenge, not greater than it has ever faced before, perhaps, but still great enough to call forth the best in all of us. For we face a phenomenal opportunity. The fundamental issue is simple: How do you kindle the grace of generosity?

## Our present dilemma

The obstacles we face are many and we will be able to

meet the opportunity if we are aware of those obstacles, two of which are mentioned here:

1. Pastors and church workers are reluctant to talk about money. No training was provided for it in school. Few of us have ever read much about the responsible use of resources. We skirt around those sections of Scripture that deal with money, perhaps, because we know how large a share of the local church's budget goes into our salaries and because we do not want to be seen as begging for ourselves. Our biggest problem, however, is that we as ministers have also been infected by the disease of greed. We think it is somehow uncouth to talk about money openly with people and we seldom, if ever, preach about giving.

2. We are inundated by "appeals" for help. In many communities these needs are painfully evident on the streets. With modern technology of phone solicitation and computerized mailing lists, there is an unending stream of causes and very real needs. We have built up an elaborate series of defenses to survive. Many of these campaigns are so slick and effective that they melt the resistance that people have towards giving to certain

causes before they even know it. Often the church is the last cause we consider when it should be the first.

## The early church

To see the key issue in perspective, let us consider how a great pastor, church builder, and mission strategist, Paul of Tarsus, dealt with this central issue. Specifically, I invite you to look over his shoulder as he writes to the Corinthians in making the first recorded financial appeal in the history of the church. He had a strong enough sense of mission that he could invite people to "imitate" him just as he imitated Christ. Although this is not a call for a slavish imitation, certainly as a model he has at least as much claim for our attention as the secular world of fund raising.

## Paul as fund-raiser

2 Cor. 8 and 9 have appealed to me ever since my first years of preaching. They address themselves especially well to the themes of thanksgiving and stewardship. Over the years they have worn well because they demonstrate Paul's psychological skills and show him with particular gifts in relating theology at its profoundest levels to the art of fund-raising.

The immediate situation that brought forth this financial appeal was the need to remind the Corinthians that a major fund-raising effort was under way. Here Paul wants to be sure that he is not embarrassed by the amount Corinth gives. But at a deeper level, he is also concerned that they not miss out on this gracious opportunity.

What strikes us is the omission of the usual term for "col-

lection" that Paul has used in 1 Cor. 16:1. In its place, the range of terms Paul uses to describe this endeavour encompasses the essential elements of the Christian mission.

## Planted in grace

The words fall into several clusters: First the theological cluster which describes the heart of our faith. The word that dominates the two chapters is that purest of all Christian terms: grace. Ten times it appears in this chapter, like a gentle rain permeating the soil with the theme that all that we have and are is a free gift from God. And all that we do in response to that gift is also a grace.

## Love in action

Love follows with only three references, but it is basic to generosity. It is because of their generous love for Paul and his associates (8:3) that he does not order them, but "puts their love to the test" (8:8) by inviting them to "give clear expression of their love" (8:24) by their generous contribution. Paul had a profound understanding and appreciation for love. He spoke about it more than did Jesus, if the synoptic gospels are accurate indicators. But it is not as a philosopher debating about love that Paul made his mark. Rather he did so by helping to establish communities whose faith activated their love. Love was not an emotion for Paul; it was an act directed to the well-being of others.

## Partners in joy

Another important term in this cluster is the term joy. Because we confuse joy with happiness or pleasure, we tend to

overlook how basic joy is to the Christian good news. Surely the finest definition of the task of the church is the one that Paul used to describe his role as a Christian pastor: "We do not dictate the terms of your faith; we work with you in bringing you joy" (2 Cor. 1:24). That's a simple test for one's effectiveness and of that of the church.

Paul begins his appeal with a reference to the joy of the Christians in Macedonia who "from the depths of their poverty had shown themselves abounding in joy" (2 Cor. 8:2). He is also convinced that God does not want givers from whom one extracts donations. There should be "an eager desire to give" (8:11). There should be "no reluctance, no sense of compulsion; God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). Joy is one of the clearest hallmarks of the Christian community. An early writing of the second century describes Christians as "children of joy." Pressuring people to give does not result in joyous giving.

The fundamental question to be asked of every Christian worker and of every institution at year's end is: Have we increased the joy of the Lord for others and among us?

The final term we will discuss is justice (*dikaioisune*). Each time Paul uses that word (2 Cor. 9:9-10) the translators render it "benevolence" (NEB), "righteousness" (KJV, NIV), or "good deeds" (Jerusalem). But the straightforward meaning of the word is justice. This accords with the Jewish division of charitable works, some being acts of justice and others acts of mercy or almsgiving.

*Continued on page 12...*

they wear today. But what about Leroy? He's growing all the time. Yes, Leroy needed winter boots last week when it snowed, and they were almost \$20. And there's always something he needs at school, two dollars here, three dollars there.

I fill in a monthly budget of \$40 for clothing, and \$30 for school and recreational expenses. Medical costs are \$20 each month.

"Elaine has to take these pills, see, 'cause she has a bad back and she can't stand the pain unless she takes them." There's a subtext coming through here, which is the surprising unity of this couple. He's supportive of her inability

to hold down a job; she accepts him as provider at whatever level he provides.

## Intentions don't count

We continue with the form, and in the process I hear the really scary fact: for being \$80 in arrears, Don is being sued for default by his ex. He has to pay only \$30 a month in the first place, which represents \$15 per child under age 21. He's less than three months behind.

I think of the cash in my wallet, ready to pay down on my operating loan. Would I miss \$80? But would it help, or would it be a default on the mortgage next week?

What about food — is that a more urgent need? Would a bushel of apples help? I'm cleaning up the garage — what if I gave him that perfectly good window we took out during renovations last winter? He could sell it for probably a hundred bucks. Should I ask the church deacons to pitch in?

Don and Elaine don't go to church. She used to come faithfully. Maybe I should ask her to come for the special Christmas services. Maybe not, either. This doesn't seem like the time for evangelizing. They need more practical help this morning. We add up the totals. I write the date and Don signs.

"In a way I'm happy this is

going to court," he ponders. "Maybe I can explain to them that I've been trying to make the payments, but I just got a little behind. All I need is to get a few of these here bills paid off and I'll be all right. If she'd only give me a bit of time I'd manage OK." He gets angry again.

"For 80 lousy bucks she's dragging me into court. In the meantime she's living high on the hog with that there man of hers. He stays there most of the time, and I hate to say he's lazy but she's supporting him half the time. I can't prove he stays there, mind you, but I have a pretty good idea. And she gets mother's benefits and goes to

Halifax to do her shopping, and I'm lucky to get my groceries in town here. I really should shoot the...." Don's careful language has gone completely by the boards now. The injustice of a system that won't allow him to live out his good intentions drives him to thoughts of violence. I look at Elaine, thinking maybe she'll roll her eyes or give me a knowing look. But her mouth is trembling and her eyes are on my Royal Albert sugar pot.

I have no answers, despite being a "community leader."

*Anne Hatten is a farmer and writer living in Kentville, N.S.*



# The grace of generosity

...continued from page 11

Justice is an important element in Paul's argument, especially in chapter 8 where he affirms that the aim of charitable efforts is equality (8:14, twice).

## The church as servant

The second cluster of terms has to do with service. The term service *diakonia* dominates here. Although it is related to our term deacon, it should not be confused with what we have done with the diaconate. It is a fundamental term in the Christian vocabulary which appears here six times and describes what happens when grace joined with love puts on a public face. It has been said that the dominant symbol of the Christian church is the towel, for Jesus took a towel and a basin and performed the role of a slave to his disciples when he washed their feet (John 13). So too we are here to serve others.

Service through contributions is closely related to (*leiturgia*), liturgy, in 2 Cor. 9:12 as part of the prescribed order for God's people. For Paul, the true liturgy of the Church is to share one's resources. Related are the terms, *eulogia*, (2 Cor. 9:5-6), literally a word of blessing which appears three times and is translated "bounty" or "gift" (9:5, 6). It is a highly unusual usage and points to the way in which Paul has joined worship with life. Lest there be any doubt about that, he also uses the term *eucharistia*, "flood of thanksgiving" (9:12), for the church lives not only from grace but also in gratitude for the magnanimity of Christ, the basis of Paul's appeal (2 Cor. 10:1).

Whatever creed or confession the early church may have had at this point, it is evident that for Paul the faithfulness of a confession (*homologia*, 9:13) is measured by generosity. It is as simple as that. The greedy,

the miserly, those who have not learned to share with others the richness of God's grace are unorthodox.

Paul is on thoroughly Jewish ground here and no doubt following in the steps of Jesus as well. Money was not considered dirty but rather a means for serving God. Paul was not the least embarrassed about asking for money, especially not when the unity of the church was at stake. Not only is he not embarrassed, one senses enthusiasm and energy as his appeal concludes with that ringing thanksgiving: Thanks (*Charis!*) be to God for that gift which words cannot express (2 Cor. 9:15).

## Our world and Paul's world

Nothing is gained by ignoring the distance that separates us from Paul. Twenty centuries is a long time. At the same time we lose a great deal if we do not recognize the deep ties that bind us to the early Christian communities and the light they can shed on our own self-understanding and the empowerment they can give us. Here are some ways in which Paul can inform us.

1. We can learn from Paul to treat people as thinking individuals who have to make up their own minds. One of the insights that come from these two chapters is that people are to be respected and that the gospel does not allow us to treat them as objects. Manipulating people into serving or giving is wrong. There is a deep tension here between the way the church appeals to people for support and the way the world does.

A nationally acclaimed fundraiser in Canada is quoted as attributing his success in getting a large gift: "It's a matter of pressing the hot buttons." That is obnoxious and insulting to the donor. It treats people like gadgets that can be manipulated. It cannot be a part of our ministry. Our conduct must be guided not by worldly wisdom but by a devout and godly integrity (cf. 2 Cor. 1:12). We respect persons as servants of God with their individual gifts.

2. Paul avoids a levy or assessment and suggests instead that the amount of the gift be determined by only one criterion: "Give according to

your means" (2 Cor. 8:11) or "in proportion to your gains" (1 Cor. 16:2). My temptation is always to decide how much others should be giving. That, Paul says, is not for me to decide but for donors to decide for themselves (2 Cor. 9:7).

Have you ever considered how freeing that is? And how burdensome? Here the call to maturity in Christ is at its highest point. Many decisions in the Pauline community were group decisions. Even individual decisions like whether to eat meat or drink wine were conditioned by the feelings of others. Donations are, without exception, left to individual choices. We can influence those choices, to be sure. Above all, we are commissioned to provide intellectual information to influence those choices. But ultimately the decision on whether or how much to give is made between the donor and God.

3. As pastor or church worker, we stand at a critical and decisive point. Reflect on your ministry and ask how many people you know who are miserable because they became regular givers to the

church? I can think of none. Conversely, many of us can point to numerous individuals who have been caught up in generosity and who continue to derive deep and abiding joy from investing their resources in the stewardship of the gospel. The rewards of such partnership in joy continue for many years. It is important to work at overcoming your inhibitions on talking with people about money. It will not spoil your ministry. Rather it will deepen it immeasurably, especially if it is related to a theological ministry rooted in Jesus' own life of poverty and sharing.

4. A very important aspect of any ministry is our ability to listen to people. Often people are in fact asking us to help them with decisions: Should they support this cause? How much money should they leave to their children? What proportion of their donations should go to the church? to community organizations? universities? colleges? seminaries? hospitals? There is no reason they should not be able to ask us such questions and, without favoring our own personal

causes, we should be able to help them arrive at a decision that fits them.

It is a great privilege to be in on such decisions. A great joy. A great responsibility. Listen for it. It is a vital part of your ministry and coheres with your counselling and preaching ministry.

5. True dividends can come from living beyond oneself. The writer of 1 Timothy, writing presumably to a church worker or pastor, warns about the temptations to become rich. The writer urges Timothy to encourage the rich to be generous and to invest their money in spiritual causes that will yield true dividends. Consider your role as a church worker as that of investment counsellor. The results are immediate and they are long run. Anyone who invests in the reign of God and its values — peace, justice, and joy inspired of the Holy Spirit — will never be disappointed in the results.

*William Klassen is principal of St. Paul's United College in Waterloo, Ont.*



PHOTO: CALL THEM CANADIANS

**P & M**  
can be found  
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## Opinion

## A 'Brave New World' is here

## The ethics of human cloning

Curt Gesch

The whole business of cloning human embryos gives me the jitters. I think the Brave New World is already here. Just think of the people who have doctors check the sex of a fetus and then decide on an abortion if it isn't a boy (yes, this happens in Canada). Or of yuppie types who are so sincerely "concerned" about the world population situation that they will never have more than one kid, but it had better be the right one, the preferred sex "for us." So they have sex at the right time of day, right time of month, etc., to get "what they want."

There is this old poet in Montreal who has advanced Parkinson's disease and who needs to have his body moved every 15 minutes or he'll "seize up" and die. He's been like this for three years and is still fighting bravely on. No Dr. Death machine for him. He is waiting for some tissue from an aborted fetus that can be inserted into his brain to help his situation. I'm not sure I'm opposed to this; in my opinion this man is a pro-life type.

## Litmus test of selflessness

I think the question "Is the embryo a human being?" is a red herring. The real question

is: "Are our ideas about reproduction, sterility and/or infertility selfish or selfless?"

A second question regards how we think of the human body. And third, treating (potential) human life as *object* rather than *subject* underlies cloning research, as in: "She might consider having an embryo cloned for future use."

To argue about "whether an embryo is a human" or "whether this or that kind of genetic research is allowable" is to miss the point. Medical technology is merely one of the faces of the god that Neil Postman calls *Technopoly*.

In *technopoly*, all experts are invested with the charisma of priestliness. Some of our priest-experts are called psychiatrists, some psychologists, some sociologists, some statisticians. The god they serve does not speak of righteousness or goodness or mercy or grace. Their god speaks of efficiency, precision, objectivity. (P. 90, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, Vintage, 1993).

In this case the rationale for the experimentation is information. But will information — combined with medical technology — solve the problems of infertile couples, give satisfaction to the lonely? In

our world, "fewer and fewer people are bound in any serious way to biblical or other religious traditions as a source of compelling attention and authority, the result of which is that they make no moral decisions, only practical ones. This is still another way of defining technopoly. The term is aptly used for a culture whose available theories do not offer guidance about what is acceptable information in the moral domain" (p. 79).

## Ethics 'layer' not enough

A Nov. 8 *Time* article on cloning concludes that it is "becoming increasingly apparent to the researchers exploring these frontiers that they have to become ethicists as well as scientists." This sounds like a noble ideal. It is true, though? Must a scientist be an ethicist? Must he or she be expert in two scientific fields? Is not this comment, said I think with a sincere heart, a misunderstanding of our society's malaise? Do we need ethicists, another bunch of specialists?

I think that the author of the *Time* articles misses the point. One of our society's biggest problems is that science has been seen to be a value-free discipline. Adding a layer of ethics to it will not suffice. Christians understand — or

ought to understand — that no aspect of human life is free from responsibility to God, humankind and the creation. Thus every part of life is "ethical."

Allow me to give a few examples from other areas of life, starting with farming. Deciding whether to do research on embryos is an ethical decision, as is deciding whether to use bovine growth hormone or embryo transplants or artificial insemination on one's cows. But the decision to put cows on grass or on a paved feedlot is also ethical.

Investing in a 150-cow dairy herd has ethical implications as well. Is it a good way to use resources? Will the extra work allow me to employ more people? How do I treat this now necessary employee? Do I give profit sharing? Who works on Sundays? And how many of my expenses do I write off for income tax purposes?

## Ethically responsive through and through

Is anything that's legal in business moral? While the work of business advisers, professors and business ethicists is valuable, all human beings, and each group of

humans are called and required to be ethically responsive beings at all times, in all areas of life.

"Ethics" used in this sense needs a grounding. Empiricism, technology and materialism all fail to give an adequate grounding for ethical behavior. We need a comprehensive worldview based upon the God who revealed himself as one of us, who as a human being struggled with difficult decisions. We need a comprehensive worldview that is systematic, catholic and historical, with ideas tested (if not suppressed) by the weight of tradition.

We live in a world in which scientists, accountants and health-care workers can graduate without taking a course in philosophy or history, without reading Dostoevsky, Calvin or even Muggeridge.

Who can doubt the need for restrictions on research? Who can doubt the need for repentance and reformation of a whole culture in love with an idol of destruction?

Curt Gesch is a writer living in Telkwa, B.C.

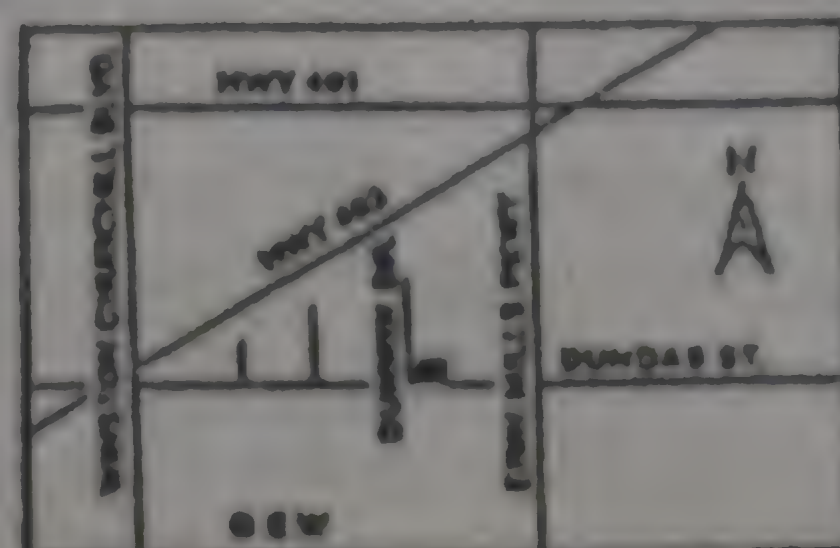
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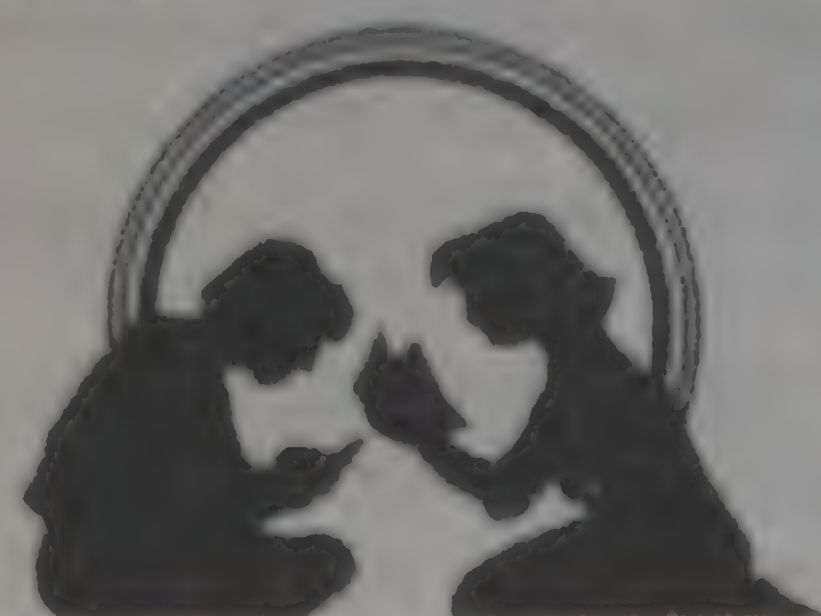
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## Meditation/Books

## Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

*Pax Romana, pax Christi*

"In the days of Caesar Augustus... Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son" (Luke 2).

The world was tired, says Will Durant, after the glorious days of Julius Caesar. Twenty years of civil war decimated the Italian peninsula. Farms were neglected, towns sacked, wealth stolen or spoiled. When Julius Caesar was stabbed in the back by his friends in 44 B.C., the doors on the Temple of Janus in Rome were opened. Janus was the god of war, and his temple doors stood open whenever armed conflict erupted. Those doors wouldn't close again for two decades!

## Showed promise

And then came Augustus. Born Gaius Octavius, he showed promise as a child. Julius Caesar had left a will appointing young Octavius as his son and heir. Son of the God, he was, and chosen to sit on the throne of the world!

In 29 B.C. the doors of the Temple of Janus were closed. The sword of Caesar brought peace to the world. The Senate in Rome ordered the building of an altar inscribed: *pax Augusta* — the Peace of Augustus. His birthday, September 23, was declared a world holiday on which trade was to cease, and gifts were to be distributed. An ancient inscription reads: [*The birthday*] of the god has marked the beginning of the gospel through him for the world!

What more could the world need? What more could any god give?

## Can't give peace of heart

And yet, it was in the days of Caesar Augustus, says Luke, in the days of the great *pax Augusta*, that another gift was given. Epictetus, the first-century philosopher, admitted that "...while the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief and envy. He cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearns more than even for outward peace."

The Pax Romana was the peace of power, the peace of the eternal standoff, the peace of toleration, but never of love or warmth or affection.

"In the days of Caesar Augustus..." in the time of the great *pax Romana*, another child was born, a gift of mystery, a man destined to be king.

His coming was played out in the parabolic tale of a hospital maternity ward. As the room grew larger and the number of babies expanded, the wailing of one disturbed the next, and often the entire room erupted in a cacophony of cries. Someone found a solution when she played a tape over the speakers in the room. Music? No, the sound of a heartbeat!

So it was in the days of Caesar Augustus. The world knew the *pax Romana*. But peace that is forced upon a society with the dictates of power cannot long satisfy the inner cries of the heart. And in the shell of the *pax Romana*, the *pax Christi* entered with a quieting heartbeat that softly reverberated through the world. As the poet put it:

*Thou shalt know him when he comes, / Not by any din of drums, / Nor by anything he wears, / Neither by his crown, / Nor by his gown; / But his presence known shall be / By the holy harmony / Which his coming makes in thee.*

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Chr. Ref. Church in London, Ont.

## The Pied Piper still lures

## The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Retold and illustrated by Michèle Lemieux



*The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, retold and illustrated by Michelle Lemieux. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 1993. Hardcover, 32 pp.; ISBN 1-55074-124-1, \$12.95. Reviewed by Doro J. Bakker, Nanaimo, B.C.

Hamelin was a grand medieval town. Life was easy for the townspeople. Maybe too easy, for the people thought only of their own pleasures. So selfish were they that they considered their own children to be merely a time-consuming nuisance.

One Christmas Eve all of that changed. Thousands of rats invaded the town. The people were frantic. Rats were everywhere — under the beds and in the cupboards. Within three days the rats had eaten all the food. Not deterred, they began chewing on other things:

pillows, tables, books.

The people despaired and the mayor offered a huge reward to anyone who could rid the town of these terrifying rats. On the fourth day a stranger clad in brightly colored clothes appeared and accepted the mayor's challenge. The Pied Piper walked to the marketplace where he began to play a strange, yet wonderful melody on his simple wooden pipe. So charming was his tune that all of the rats stopped their eating to follow the piper where he led them to their deaths.

By the time the Pied Piper returned to collect his reward, the townspeople had returned to their selfish ways and the greedy mayor reneged on the promised reward. "You will regret this," the Pied Piper said, and he left empty-handed. Long after the townspeople

had forgotten how they had been rescued from their plight, the Pied Piper returned, this time to collect his own kind of reward.

Michelle Lemieux retells *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* with her childhood memories of this popular legend as her guide. It was her aim to capture the greed of the citizens of Hamelin and the magic of the piper's tune.

Each of Lemieux's paintings are rich in color and detail. Her use of light gives a modern edge to these medieval scenes. Her well-researched knowledge of 13th-century Germany makes the sights and sounds of a typical medieval town come alive for us. This is a wonderful edition of the classic tale of the *Pied Piper of Hamelin*.



# The day Brent failed as a baker

## Or: The case of the strange grease balls

Marvin Bos

Last week the holiday season was officially ushered into our townhouse unit.

Brent came bursting through

the door with a 20 lb. bag of flour under his arm and a gleam in his eyes. He was going to make 900 *oliebollen* for our Christmas party the

next day or die trying (or at least until something that seemed like more fun happened along).

Armed with a recipe from a



Peter and Marja  
are



### Dear P & M:

*I accidentally turned the wrong program on last Sunday. I could not believe my eyes. It was a faith healing program that came out of Tulsa, Oklahoma. I was completely astonished by all the wonders and miracles I saw. It left me with a lot of questions. Are those people really gifted by the Holy Spirit? Are they only after money? Are such shows for real?*

*I took my Bible and read Acts 3 where Peter and John healed a lame man in the name of Jesus Christ. Acts 5 goes on to tell us about sick people who were carried out into the streets so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on them. As he passed by they were all healed.*

*I don't know what to think of this show. I can't get it off my mind. By the way, I'm a 79-year-old member of the Christian Reformed Church.*

### Dear Faith-Healing Skeptic:

We should be very suspicious of any ministry which presents a "gospel of health and wealth." Of course God can heal, and he does it in many different ways. But we are deeply offended by the suggestion that sickness and poverty can be overcome by a strong enough faith.

When one of our panelists, Marian Van Til, was a teenager, she lost her mother to cancer. For four years, from ages 12-16, she prayed for healing. She believes that the fact that her mom still lived those four years (it was a fast-growing cancer) was a miracle. As you can imagine, that teen experience was a formative faith experience for her. It taught her to rely on God in life and in death, in plenty and in want, in success and in failure, and in sickness and in health.

As a teenager, Peter remembers a close family friend who struggled with multiple

sclerosis. For a time, this man went from one healing service to the next. By the time various faith healers were done with him he had not one, but two problems. He still had multiple sclerosis; and he began to question his faith — since he wasn't healed he apparently didn't have enough belief in God, he reasoned.

When watching one of these television shows, look for signs that the audience is being manipulated. Are there urgent pleas for funds? Is there a hyper atmosphere and a frantic build-up of pressure? Is the pastor trying to bind God and force a healing through his own will? Does the pastor leave room for the possibility that it may not be God's will that someone be healed?

Don't get us wrong. We believe in the power of prayer! And we believe in miracles! In fact, many of our readers can attest to the Lord's miraculous interventions in their lives. But we don't believe everything we see on television and neither should you. Too many con artists have shaken the faith of too many needy and gullible souls. We must be on guard against anything that undermines the trust implicit in Christ's Gethsemane prayer: "Not my will, but yours be done."

A senior pastor in our area recommends the book *Beyond Seduction* by Dave Hunt as a good exposé of various faith healers. May God help us discern between the work of the Holy Spirit and the force of someone's personality.

Write to: P & M

c/o Christian Courier

4-261 Martindale Road

St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

*Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Tom Zeyl, Irene Bom, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.*



friend's mother, all necessary ingredients, and a borrowed deep fryer set up outside, he slashed the bag of flour from one side to the other and bent to the task.

For the rest of the evening he and his girlfriend mixed, measured, spending hours, it seemed, in phone consultation with the keeper of the recipe. The rest of us sniggered behind the bakers' backs while trying to escape the deep-frying odor which was slowly pervading the house.

Now, I don't know much about making *oliebollen* myself, but I do know that a deep fryer left outside in winter can't possibly get oil hot enough. Sure enough — the dough-encapsulated balls of

grease which came out of the fryer were a far cry from the real *oliebollen* we had grown to love. (If it was grease I wanted, I could eat some of my own cooking!) By the end of the night Brent had about three dozen made and his enthusiasm was starting to wane. Bob offered to buy the remaining ingredients if Brent promised to never bake again.

The Christmas party went off without a hitch. Between the two units (the neighbors and ourselves) approximately 60-70 people dropped by throughout the course of the evening. As for the *oliebollen*, they made great conversation starters — and some unwitting souls even ate them!

## AVAILABLE FOR CALL

The Council of the First Chr. Ref. Church of Kitchener, Ont., recommends the Rev. Dan Tigchelaar to the congregations of the Christian Reformed Church for a call. He may be contacted at 129 Meaford Drive, Waterloo, ON N2J 4K4. Phone (519) 888-6380.

Kroonprins sloeg goed figuur op eerste startbezook

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## Health and Nutrition

## New hope for a diabetes cure 'within five years'

Marian Van Til

LOS ANGELES — Medical researchers in Los Angeles announced recently in *Nature* magazine that they may have discovered the first step — or even a few steps — in developing a cure for Type 1 (insulin dependent) diabetes. The scientists have been able to prevent the disease in mice after having discovered what exactly goes wrong in the bodies of rodents

prone to the disease.

Two independent groups of scientists, one at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), the other at Stanford University, made the discovery almost simultaneously.

"These are studies you have to call convincing," says James Gavin, president of the American Diabetes Association. "They're clearly likely to have human applications."

Type 1 diabetes is one of the "autoimmune" diseases — it causes the body's immune system to attack instead of defend itself, killing particular cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. It is believed the recent discovery will allow the development of a treatment to prevent that kind of erroneous response in the body of diabetics.

The researchers confirmed a

suspected link between Type 1 diabetes and the type of virus which causes colds, sore throats and more serious symptoms. That virus carries a protein very similar to a protein on pancreatic cells which produce insulin. The research suggests that when the immune system has learned to recognize the virus as an invader and then to attack it, it does the same with the insulin-

making cells, assuming the good cells are "enemies."

Dr. Daniel Kaufman, a UCLA molecular biologist who was part of the discovery, says that they're now able to completely prevent such a response in mice, and within five years the method will be safe enough to try on human beings.

## Cervical cancer can be stopped before it starts

### Educating women about Pap smears saves lives

Marian Van Til

BALTIMORE, Md. — Cervical cancer used to be the leading cause of cancer deaths in women, but thanks to the Pap smear (named after Papanicolaou, its developer) it is no longer, reports the December issue of *The Johns Hopkins Medical Letter*.

A Pap smear is a simple and quick procedure which can be performed by either a gynecologist or a general practitioner. It involves using a small wooden spatula and brush to scrape cells from the cervix. The cells are then placed on a slide and stained so they can be viewed under a microscope for abnormalities.

Since the Pap smear began to be widely used in the 1940s, says the medical letter, cervical cancer deaths have dropped by 70 per cent. And if a woman has regular Pap tests, she can almost totally prevent cervical cancer.

### Older women urged not to be reluctant

Older women, however, are still getting cervical cancer at much higher rates than other women because they are either reluctant to be tested or to follow up on tests they have.

But a recently released Canadian study offers hope: it found that when older women were informed ahead of time

about what to expect when getting a Pap smear and any treatment necessary if their test showed abnormalities, they were much less anxious and were more amenable to treatment.

Not all abnormalities shown by Pap smears are cancerous or potentially cancerous. In fact, only about 10 per cent are. But if you have a Pap smear which shows abnormalities, doctors urge you to *follow up on it*. Doing so could save your life.

If you are in the small percentage of women whose Pap test shows dysplasia (abnormal cells that can develop into cancer), your doctor will probably want you to have a more

thorough exam called a colposcopy. That involves visually examining your cervix with a lighted, magnifying scope (a colposcope). Any abnormal tissues found will then be biopsied.

If the biopsy confirms dysplasia, the abnormal cells will need to be removed to prevent full-blown cancer.

These cells can be removed, without general anesthetic and usually with little pain, either through cryosurgery (a means of freezing the cells), electrosurgery (which destroys the cells with heat), or laser surgery (which vaporizes the cells).

## Canned vegetables aren't nutritious' is a myth

Marian Van Til

NEW YORK — The nutrients pretty much disappear when vegetables are canned. That's what most of us have been told. And at one time that was true, but no longer.

The University of California Berkeley *Wellness Letter* reports that improved canning technology and the use of new types of can linings now help canned fruits and vegetables retain most of their vitamins and minerals. "Canned beans, pumpkin, corn, pineapple and beets, to name a few, are actually quite nutritious," says the *Wellness Letter*.

The extended heating process used in commercial canning partially destroys certain vitamins, especially C and

B, as well as beta carotene. Minerals fare better, "though significant quantities end up in the canned liquid" (a good reason to make use of that liquid rather than throwing it away).

The *Wellness Letter* points out that home preparation (especially boiling until "well done") can also destroy these vitamins. Microwaving is the least destructive way to prepare vegetables that need cooking.

### 'Fresh' isn't always fresh

While local fresh vegetables are undoubtedly the best choice for vegetable eaters, it must be remembered that "fresh" vegetables sold in grocery stores are generally picked while unripe and then trucked

many miles. They are often stored for long periods as well — "in which case they offer no advantage over their canned or frozen counterparts," says the health letter.

Once a can is sealed, the letter points out, its contents experience little nutrient deterioration, "even after a couple of years, unless stored at high temperatures for long periods."

Many canned vegetables can be faulted more for being high in sodium. If you want to cut down on your sodium intake, wash the vegetables first, or buy the no-salt-added varieties now available.

## Book influences suicides

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — The number of suicides involving suffocation by plastic bag increased substantially in New York City last year, and researchers at Cornell University and the Medical Examiner's Office in the city attribute the growth to Derek Humphrey's book *Final Exit*, published in March of 1992. According to an article in the Nov. 11 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the book was found at the scenes of nine of 33 suicides by asphyxiation, and was also implicated in seven suicides by poisoning.

The researchers said the line between suicide and euthanasia is being blurred, and added, "efforts to destigmatize euthanasia or even encourage it for some groups may have the untoward effect of promoting suicide in other groups."

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throughout the coming year

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If you wish a photo included, send us the original.          d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.          e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to six column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$13.50 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p><b>NEWLYWEDS &amp; NEW PARENTS</b>          We offer a one-year subscription for only \$20.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$20.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p><b>Christian Courier</b>          4-261 Martindale Rd.          St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1          Phone: (905) 682-8311          Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	<p><b>DEVRIES-VAN DUYNENVOORDE:</b>          With thanks to our Lord, we, Jeremy and Karen are overjoyed to announce the birth of a healthy little son,  <b>DYLAN JEREMY</b>          on Dec. 5, 1993.          Dylan has a proud big sister Melissa Karen.          He is also the fourth grandchild for Pete and Jane Van Duynenvoorde, and the second for John &amp; Madeline Devries.          Home address: 971 Boyle Road, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0</p> <p><b>EISEN:</b>          John and Jacqui thank God for the birth of another son,  <b>CALEB JUSTIN</b>          born Nov. 29, 1993, weighing 8 lbs., 10 oz.          A little brother for Kate, Nathan, Simeon and Tessa. Sixth grandchild for Simon and Corry Eygenraam, Brampton, Ont., and fifth grandchild for John and Trudy Eisen, Renfrew, Ont. Another great-grandchild for Mrs. J. Miedema-VanGeest, St. Catharines, Ont., and Mrs. Y. Alkema-Bergsma, Friesland, the Netherlands.          Home address: 22 Spencer Street, Welland, ON L3B 3W2</p> <p><b>Anniversaries</b></p> <p>Groningen Rexdale          1944 January 7 1994          "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Ps. 119:105).          With praise and thanksgiving to God we celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,  <b>WILLE JAN and DIEVERTJE HUIZENGA (VAN DER VEEN)</b>          With love,          Lammert &amp; Mary Huizenga          Michael, Jeanette, Christy, Karin &amp; Paul (Ryan), Linda &amp; Derrick (Joshua)          Gerry &amp; Dia ter Haar          Michelle, Denise, Philip          Peter &amp; Tina Huizenga          Willy, Jody, Ben, Aaron, Dan, Christian, Stephen, Robyn          Willy &amp; Linda Huizenga          Nicholas          An invitation is hereby extended to everyone who wishes to join us in a thanksgiving worship service at the Rehoboth Fellowship Chr. Ref. Church, 800 Burnhamthorpe Road, Etobicoke, Ont. at 3 p.m., followed by a reception (4-5 p.m.).          Home address: 53 Barker Avenue, Rexdale, ON M9V 1E7</p>	<p><b>FLIM:</b></p>  <p>Nijverdal Whitby          Overijssel Ontario          Jan. 4, 1899 Jan. 4, 1994          Happy birthday to a much loved father, Opa and great-grandfather!          On Jan. 4, 1994,  <b>GERRIT HENDRIK FLIM</b>          hopes to celebrate his 95th birthday. Even at this great age he is able to ride his bicycle!          Thanks to God for giving us a compassionate and caring father. Throughout his long life he was and is still there for us and for the many people he has met on his way. Father's favorite psalm which we often sing at family celebrations is Psalm 68: "Let God be praised with reverence deep."  <i>Geloofd zij God met diepst ontzag!          Hij overlaadt ons dag aan dag met zijne gunstbewijzen.          Die God is onze zaligheid;          wie zou die hoogste Majesteit dan niet met eerbied prijzen?          Die God is ons een God van heil,          Hij schenkt uit goedheid zonder peil ons 't eeuwig zalig leven.          Hij kan en wil en zal in nood,          zelfs by het naad' ren van den dood,          volkomen uitkomst geven.          (Psalm 68:10, berijmd).</i>          His thankful children:          Aly &amp; Aize Dykstra — Orono, Ont.          Dien Oudyk — Oshawa, Ont.          Henk &amp; Flora Flim — Oshawa, Ont.          Berta &amp; Albert Hosmar — Whitby, Ont.          George &amp; Ann Flim — Lethbridge, Ont.          Jenny &amp; Cameron Linnell — Woodstock, Ont.          Joanne &amp; Fred Wind — Whitby, Ont.          44 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.          Open house at the Fellowship Hall, Hebron Chr. Ref. Church, 407 Crawford St., Whitby, Jan. 8, 1994, 10 a.m.-noon. Best wishes only please.          Address: 14 Canadian Oaks Drive, Whitby, ON L1N 6W8</p>	<p>The Lord called to his eternal home our beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and uncle,  <b>JOHN TAMMING</b>          in his 90th year at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital on Tuesday, Dec. 14, 1993.          Beloved husband of Jantje Klinker-Bos.          Predeceased by his first wife Geesje Bork and granddaughter Ekka Tamming.          Dear father of:          John &amp; Froukje Tamming — Strathroy          Ralph &amp; Tina Tamming — Strathroy          Martin &amp; Nellie Tamming — Samia          Jim &amp; Barb Tamming — Strathroy          Albert &amp; Martha Tamming — Richmond Hill          Johan &amp; Hilda Tamming — Orangeville          George Tamming — Samia          Ryna Tamming — Samia          Hank &amp; Riek Meyering — Strathroy          Harry &amp; Riek Klinker — Samia          John &amp; Rennie Feddema — Strathroy          Don &amp; Linda Klinker — Strathroy          Menno &amp; Effie Eelkema — Listowel          Jack Klinker — Surrey, B.C.          Survived by 50 grandchildren and 50 great-grandchildren.          The funeral service was held at the Westmount Chr. Ref. Church on Drury Lane on Friday, Dec. 17, 1993. Interment at Strathroy Cemetery.          Correspondence address: Mr. John Tamming, 397 Metcalfe Street West, Strathroy, ON N7G 1N6</p> <p><b>Personal</b></p> <p><b>THE CONSULATE-GENERAL WOULD LIKE TO COME IN CONTACT WITH THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:</b>          =====  <b>BROUWER</b>, Mr. Hendrik Albertus, born May 14, 1926 in Den Ham, last known address in the Netherlands: Jozef Israelslaan 30, 1401 CR Bussum, immigrated to Canada in 1991.  <b>BRUNENBERG</b>, Mr. J., born April 25, 1929, last known address in the Netherlands: Vredenoordkade 14B, 3061 MR Rotterdam, immigrated to Canada April 17, 1968, last known address: Prospectstreet 229, Hamilton, Ontario.  <b>BRULL</b>, Mr. Hubertus T.M., born May 25, 1929, last known address in the Netherlands: 1e Scheepvaartstraat 14, 3151 NL Hoek van Holland, immigrated to Canada May 29, 1963.  <b>LEYDS</b>, Mr. Willem Johannes, born June 21, 1930 in Amsterdam, last known address in Canada: Postbox 6301, Station F, Hamilton, Ontario L9C 6L9.  <b>ODDING</b>, Mrs. Alie, last known address in Canada: 1813 Bowness Road, Calgary, Alberta.  <b>SLOE</b>, Mr. Johannes Sietse, born June 3, 1925, last known address in the Netherlands: The Hague, immigrated to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada April 27, 1956.  <b>STERKEN</b>, Mr. Franciscus Hubertus, born September 15, 1953 in Assen.          CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS,          1 DUNDAS STREET W., STE. 2106          TORONTO, ONTARIO M5G 1Z3</p>	<p>1897 - 1993          The Lord is my Shepherd.          The Lord took home at His appointed time his child,  <b>MRS. CORNELIA HYTEK</b>          on Dec. 10, 1993.          We express our sympathy to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.          The Golden Age Club, Chatham, Ont.</p> <p>"Jesus said: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).          On Oct. 13, 1993, after two weeks of struggling for life from injuries sustained in a car accident, Jesus healed and called home to Himself, our dear daughter, granddaughter, sister, aunt and friend,  <b>ALICE VAN HELL</b>          at the age of 31 years old.          Lovingly remembered by her parents:          John &amp; Janny Van Hell;          her grandmother:          Mrs. Roelfina Huizing — Iron Springs, Alta.          her special friend:          John Welsh — Smithville, Ont.          her brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews:          Rosa &amp; Harry Vander Kuylen — Listowel, Ont.          Jacob, Jenny, Helene, Jonathan, Lisa          Ron &amp; Sandra Van Hell — Fenwick, Ont.          Meghan, Amanda, Shane          Bruce &amp; Pat Van Hell — Lowbanks, Ont.          Chelsey, Cameron          Jane &amp; Jeff Grass — Ingersoll, Ont.          Thomas, Barry          Tim &amp; Debbie Van Hell — Welland, Ont.          Braeden          Sharon Van Hell — Wellandport, Ont.          Funeral service was held on Oct. 16, 1993, in Wellandport Chr. Ref. Church, Rev. Gary Klumpenhower officiating.          Correspondence address: R.R. #1, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0</p> <p><b>For Rent</b></p> <p><b>For rent in Grimsby, modern 3-bedroom house</b> in residential area. Available January 1, 1994.          Phone (905) 945-6380</p> <p><b>For Sale</b></p> <p>Good used Gestetner #420 duplicator with good supply of ink and stencils. Also: Olivetti Editors electric typewriter.          Please call (905) 768-5297</p>

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**Miscellaneous**


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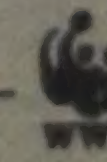
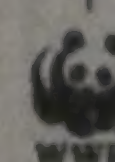
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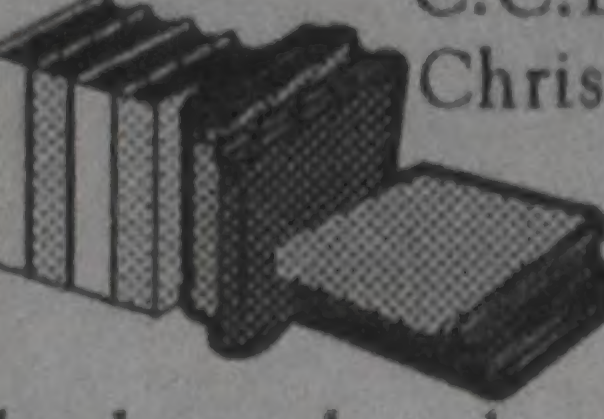
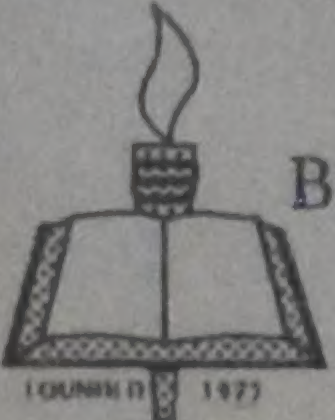
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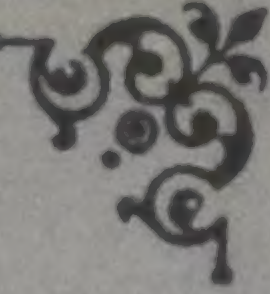
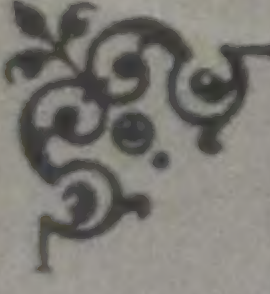

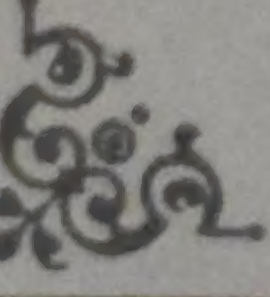
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## Calendar

**Dec. 27** Annual John Knox Chr. School hockey tournament, 7:30 a.m., at Double Rink Arenas (Jane St., just south of Hwy. 7), Woodbridge, Ont. Info.: Gary Maas, (905) 455-1886.

**Dec. 28-29** Annual concerts by the male chorus "The Ambassadors," starting at 8 p.m. **Dec. 28:** Grace Anglican Church, Brantford, Ont.; **Dec. 29:** First CRC, Hamilton, Ont. Guest organist: William Vandertuin. Audience singing includes Handel's "Halleluja Chorus." Tickets \$6 p.p., \$18 family.

**Jan. 8** "Breakfast of Champions," an in-depth, faith-stirring, practical Bible teaching experience conducted by Gerrit Verstraete. From 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Streetsville Physiotherapy, 190 Queen St. S., Mississauga, Ont. To register (\$15), call (905) 567-8373 or 826-7404.

**Jan. 21-23** Annual "Student/Young Adult Winter Retreat" at **Camp Pioneer** (Muskoka), Ont. Theme: "University of Jesus." Info.: Freda Heida (519) 433-9798, or Marvin Talsma (519) 850-0583.

**Jan. 24** The annual "Christianity & Culture" lecture, 7:30 p.m., Senate Chamber, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont. Speaker: The Rev. John Suk, editor *The Banner*, on "A critique of the rhetoric of white supremacist religion. For info. call Brock CRC chaplain the Rev. Nick Overduin at (905) 688-5550, ext. 3134, or at home (905) 688-1280.

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# World unions meet in Mauritius

## A different kind of gathering

Ed Grootenboer

After some 40 hours en route, 20 of them in cramped aircraft seats, the final descent to the island country of Mauritius is a most welcome relief for the weary traveller. I had already decided that nine time zones from Toronto and a location in the southern Indian Oceans makes Mauritius an unlikely winter vacation destination for frostbitten Canadians. However, the purpose of my trip was not leisure.

I travelled to Mauritius to participate in the World Confederation of Labor (WCL) congress as a representative of the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC). The WCL was formed in 1920 as the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, but in 1968 the name was changed. This was done in order to open the organization to unions which, although not necessarily based on Christian principles themselves, preferred the WCL's policies and program of

action to those of the other two worldwide trade union organizations: the now largely defunct communist organization, and the large AFL-CIO-dominated International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, of which the Canadian Labour Congress is a member.

The Christian Labour Association of Canada joined the WCL in 1989. As a Christian trade union we cannot affiliate nationally, but the WCL provides us with a context of support and contact with likeminded unions from some 90 countries, representing over 26 million workers. Indicative of the predominant kind of trade unionism in North America is the fact that there is only one other WCL member on this continent, the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees, a union formed in the early 1900s for black people in the public service who were not permitted to join existing unions at the time.

Every four years, the WCL

conducts a week-long congress. The 1993 congress was originally scheduled to be held in Togo, Africa, but political unrest there dictated a change of venue to the tranquillity of Mauritius.

### Good work at international level

The congress heard reports on the organization's activities during the past four years, debated policies and programs for the next four years, and elected its new board and officers. I was re-elected to serve on the board; that body meets annually to supervise the work of the WCL's staff, which works out of Brussels, Belgium.

Enthusiasm and ambition for greater action by the WCL were tempered by financial constraints. As it is, the WCL does a lot of good work internationally, both via UN agencies and directly. It works particularly in the Third World and in the former U.S.S.R., where it boldly insists on economic and political freedoms, and free and

open societies hospitable for the formation of independent trade unions.

On behalf of CLAC, the World Confederation of Labor has reported to the UN's International Labor Organization the practical lack of workers' freedom of association in Canada, particularly in the construction industry where the AFL-CIO affiliated unions vigorously and illegally oppose CLAC and its members. In the 1980s the WCL actively worked with and supported the Solidarnosc movement that led to the overthrow of communism in Poland, and subsequently in the rest of Eastern Europe and Russia.

At its own convention, April 9, 1994, CLAC plans to focus on the WCL's role in the world by having Piet Nelissen, a WCL staff member, give the keynote address.

*Ed Grootenboer is executive director of the Christian Labour Association of Canada.*

## Mauritian society: a brew of races

Ed Grootenboer

The history of Mauritius is intertwined with the colonial enterprises of three European nations. Originally an uninhabited volcanic island, the Dutch arrived in 1510, naming it after Prince Maurits of Nassau. They began denuding the tropical island of its ebony forests, created sugar cane plantations and harvested the dodo bird to extinction. After 200 years, the Dutch lost interest in the island and in 1715 the French arrived. The hundred-year French occupation is reflected today in the commonly used Creole language. In 1810 Great Britain took over, until Mauritius gained its independence in 1968.

Owing to a legacy of slavery and the subsequent importation of mainly East Indian but also Chinese indentured laborers, Mauritian society today is a brew of races, cultures and religions. Overall the impression is East Indian, with Hindu and Islam being the dominant religions. Economically the people are not badly off, by world standards, but not by European and North American standards; the average annual income is \$4,000. A policy of "full employment" and industry-paid health care is putting a real strain on the costs of goods and services. Efforts are being made to increase tourism and "free zone" manufacturing because the sugar industry is barely competitive on the world market.

In spite of having practically every arable acre planted in sugar cane, Mauritius still has spectacular natural beauty. The central plateau highland is dominated by steep volcanic mountains which are visible from practically everywhere on the 720 square mile island. The view over the Black River gorge across the cultivated flank of the island to the ocean waves breaking over the coral reefs that surround Mauritius is breathtaking. And the beach scenes are picture-perfect. Since November is spring time on this side of the world many shrubs and trees were in full and colorful bloom during my visit.



*Sugar cane cutter*



PHOTO: COURTESY ED GROOTENBOER

*Ed Grootenboer (second from l.) with Ukranian delegates.*

## News Digest

Edited by Irene Bom

### U.K. sex talks to stress morals

LONDON, Eng. — Beginning next fall the U.K. will remove sex education from the science curriculum and have it taught as a separate subject, with heavy emphasis on moral responsibility and the family.

"No school should be a value-free zone...the family is still at the core of society, the cement holding us all together," said education secretary John Patten, according to the *Toronto Star*.

Teachers will no longer present "the mechanics of reproduction," but stress family life. And they'll also be instructed not to offer advice to underage female students seeking counsel on family planning, but to tell them to talk to their parents.

The guidelines reflect the government's concern over the 9.6 billion spent a year in welfare benefits to the 1.3 million single parents. More than 10 per cent of British women aged 20 to 39 live alone with their children, compared to an Economic Community average of 6.5 per cent.

### Teen mag gives five reasons to wait

NEW YORK, N.Y. — The glossy teen magazine *YM (Young and Modern)*, sold on newsstands across North America, put out a strong call for abstinence in its November 1993 issue.

Reasons for teenage girls to wait include "You're not ready," "He's not Mr. Right," and "It's against your morals." The writer also warns readers that "sex won't save your relationship" and that unprotected sex is risky.

The article quotes a 16-year-old guy as saying that he likes virgins because "it takes pressure off me if I know she's not expecting anything." A female teen of the same age noted that "it's good to know that there are still some guys who are virgins — at least they aren't all sleaze-balls."